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THE SOUTH IN ARCHITECTURE

*BOOKS BY LEWIS MUMFORD*

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THE SOUTH IN  
ARCHITECTURE 1941

# THE SOUTH IN ARCHITECTURE

THE DANCY LECTURES

ALABAMA COLLEGE 1941

BY LEWIS MUMFORD

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY, NEW YORK

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## FOREWORD

The several chapters of this volume were originally prepared and delivered by the author at Alabama College in April, 1941, as the second series of Dancy Lectures. They are now presented to a larger audience in fulfillment of the larger purpose to which the Dancy endowment has been dedicated—namely, to foster the search for meanings in the various records of Southern culture, especially as that culture is related to the national development.

To this quest Lewis Mumford in his Dancy lectures has made a contribution of rare integrity and insight. Speaking with dispassionate eloquence, he has added grace and dignity to scholarship, and, projecting his philosophy of architecture into the future as well as the past of the South, he has broadened the base for future criticism in this field and has, we trust, illuminated the path of progress.

A. W. VAUGHAN  
CHAIRMAN FACULTY COMMITTEE  
ON THE DANCY LECTURES

*June, 1941*  
*Alabama College*  
*Montevallo, Alabama*



## THE SOUTH IN ARCHITECTURE



## LECTURE ONE

### THE BASIS FOR AMERICAN FORM

Only a very great desire to know more intimately the life and culture of the South could have tempted me to accept the invitation to visit this college and engage in discourse on a Southern theme. For I must tell you frankly that I come more as a student than as a teacher, and though the main subject of these lectures, in accordance with the stipulations of the Dancy bequest, is the work and influence of two great Southern architects, what I have to say about them will necessarily lack some of that understanding which only a native Southerner, or one who had long immersed himself in the life of the South, could give. I can make no pretensions to such intimacy; and I had rather show myself openly ignorant of matters that may be a commonplace to you, than to acquire too cheaply the sort of knowledge which guidebooks and handbooks may give. When I explained my limitations and expressed doubts about them to Dr. Vaughan, he was kind enough to treat

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them almost as virtues; and this alone gives me the courage to deal with Jefferson and Richardson with the perspective and the point of view of an outsider, one who is more conscious of their influence on the East and North and West of his country than upon the region that gave birth to them.

And, I must confess, only a special honor like this invitation to give the Dancy Lectures could have persuaded me to turn aside from the immediate crisis of the day to prepare the present series. There have been times during the past few months when I felt that I must apologize to myself, if not to this audience, for undertaking to divert their thoughts, even for a few brief hours, from the disasters which now impend over the entire world: disasters whose scope is so vast and whose ultimate results may be so tragic to the human race at large, that few of us, even the most far-sighted, even the most vigilant, have fully taken them in. Though we Americans have voted billions of dollars for armament and aid in a sort of stunned resignation, we are far from understanding the lessons of the last few years, and our leaders have not yet shown themselves ready to act with the boldness and decision that these times need. We understand as little as the Scandinavian nations under-



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stood that only in a timely political union between the surviving democracies can we create the strength and solidity to survive; we understand as little as the French did that a war of passive defense is a war that is lost before a shot has been fired; we understand too little the great lesson of England—that we must fight at once, no matter what the odds against us, if we are to gather the strength to overcome those odds and to survive. Mere caginess, mere passiveness, mere willingness to manufacture armaments without the courage to use them, may—within a brief, an all too brief period—mean the downfall of Western Civilization itself, and our own country, strong though it now seems, along with it.

At such a time as this, I have often had to ask myself, with the crisis so desperate and our souls still unready for it, dare I in all conscience think or talk to my countrymen about any other matter—particularly at a moment when those who lack courage are so vocal, and when those who all but openly espouse the cause of barbarism, and even welcome it as the Wave of the Future, so quickly get the public ear. Can I, in decency, stay at my desk to write about the historic achievements of American culture at a time when, for lack of energy and will and moral con-

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viction, all those achievements, and everything else we value, may be swallowed up by the destruction of the great civilization that supported them? Dare I hold myself to a promise I made to Alabama College three years ago, now that the situation in the world outside has so completely changed—any more than I would stay at my desk when a grass fire had broken out and was threatening the home of a neighbor? As I asked myself these questions a few weeks ago, when the ground was dry and a sharp wind was blowing, my neighbor's grass actually caught fire from a flaming brush-pile and began to eat swiftly toward his dooryard; and I answered my own question on the level of practical life, by chasing out with a shovel and a broom and helping him and a handful of other neighbors to fight that fire.

But this did not make any easier my decision to keep on writing these lectures. For the world-wide spread of totalitarian tyranny would be fully as devastating to American life as the spread of the grass fire would have been to my neighbor's house; and unlike my good, reliable country neighbors, the nations of the world have not been willing to drop their own jobs promptly enough to fight that bigger menace: so that even when they at last made up their

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minds to fight Nazism, they usually made them up too late. It is not merely that America must fight: only the ignorant and the willfully blind think we can avoid fighting sooner or later, unless we are resigned to become the fat prey of the totalitarian conquerors. But we must seize the initiative and by so seizing it, confidently rally together and lead to victory the democratic forces throughout the world. In making this decision, every month, every day, every hour that we lose will cost us dearly in human life. The longer we palter, the longer we wait, the harder becomes our eventual task. Until the American people face this fact and act accordingly, I, for one, cannot go about my work and accept such hospitality as you have so generously offered me, with a mind at peace.

Given the danger in the world at large, the logical thing, the necessary thing, the dutiful thing to do was to abandon my lectures and devote an equal amount of time to writing and speaking about the issues of the present war and the absolute necessity for America's striking at once against the Axis powers—striking *first*, and continuing to strike, with mounting force, until victory has been achieved.

What do you suppose reconciled me to my original

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promise and made it possible for me to stand up here before you today? What reconciled me was the thought that I was coming to the South, where by every account the faith in American democracy and the realization of what the present hour demands from Americans need no extra reinforcement: I was coming to a part of the country where, as a colleague of mine from Tennessee remarked, people still know how to use a gun, and still realize that only those who are ready to risk death will ever be brave enough to achieve life. I was coming to people who had demonstrated, by their obstinate and enduring example, that neither bodily safety nor creature comforts are important to them, when honor and principle are at stake. Here, I said to myself—and perhaps nowhere else in America—you can treat the present lectures as a legitimate vacation, or as a furlough if you will, to be given with a good conscience to people who are as ready as yourself to face the battle-line. Perhaps, by letting our minds play over the achievements of two of the South's distinguished sons, we will all get fresh courage to rouse our countrymen to their appointed tasks in the world at large. When a nation has hard days ahead of it—and believe me, ladies and gentlemen, there are hard and tragic days in

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store for our country for at least the next generation—it is well for that nation to turn back for a moment to its sources. For a country is more than the institutions or the people that exist in the present generation, and it is by centering on the great achievements of our past and by formulating our deep hopes for the future, that we will summon up the resolution to face the evils of our own day with an equable spirit, knowing that even if our own lives or the lives of those most dear to us are lost, something great and precious, which gave meaning to those lives, will endure.

There was one further consideration that kept my mind on these lectures instead of letting myself be driven back to some mode of speech or writing directly connected with the present catastrophe. And this is the fact that architecture, for me, is no purely technical subject; nor is it one that is remote from the major interests of a people. Inevitably, the problems raised by architecture, past or present, are similar to those raised in every other department of social life; and it may very well be, if I succeed even passably in fulfilling my task, that some observation which seems at first glance to have purely an architectural or an esthetic significance will lead you to

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trace its ramifications or draw your own conclusions in a quite different field. If we are to triumph as a democracy in the days to come, we must know what we are living for as well as what we are fighting for; and this consideration gives a dynamic relation between the subject of the present lectures and all the pressing demands of the hour.

With these apologies, and with this absolution from what I hope is not entirely a private sense of guilt, I am ready to begin.

The central subject of these lectures is the contribution of the South to American culture; and though the Dancy bequest refers in particular, I believe, to the South's literary contribution, we know that the spirit has more than one language with which to express itself, and that the language of form is no less adequate than music or letters to convey some of its most important messages. One of the purposes of this series is to arouse that sense of self-awareness and of critical understanding which goes into the making and keeping of a great tradition. The past generation of historians and scholars has done a deal to awaken, or re-awaken, our pride and confidence in our country's achievements: as a nation we no longer see the

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necessity to settle uncomfortably into a back-seat, blushing, awkward, and self-deprecating, when art or literature is on the carpet. But pride in one's past is as dangerous to the soul as any other kind of pride, unless it is mixed with humility: unless, that is, we ask ourselves how worthy we are to inherit our ancestor's achievements, and how able we are to carry their work on at as high a level as they reached. For the past is not a soft cushion on which we may comfortably lie and take our ease; it is rather a spring-board from which we gain the energy and confidence to leap into the troubled waters of our own day.

During the past generation there has been a steady issue of books on one part of the present subject: books about the exquisite urban architecture of Charleston, about the special regional adaptations of New Orleans, about the plantation architecture of the deep South. And the reconstruction of Williamsburg has given to the whole country some notion of the remarkable achievements that were possible in tide-water Virginia, at a time when plantation life was almost self-sufficient, and when conditions were still so primitive, in the midst of all the elegance and courtliness of upper-class life, that the Virginia legislature was forced to suspend its sessions in winter,

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because no brick was available for safely lining the chimney flues, and the nuisance of the continued building fires, due to the crumbling of the soft local bricks, was too great to be borne.

On this side of Southern architecture there has been no lack of appreciation. But I should hazard the guess that the ground has still only been scratched, and that when the complete story of our architecture has been told, a far richer treasure store, with a much wider variety of forms, will be discovered. Edgar Allan Poe's neo-Gothic romances, with their mystery and terror and melancholy charm, had their counterparts in more than one Southern building. And if one adds, as one must, to what is conventionally accepted as architecture in the textbooks and guides, the industrial buildings of the great era of steamboat transportation, beginning with the offices and warehouses that were done in iron and brick and glass in St. Louis, it is plain that only a fragment of the South's history in architecture has yet been recorded and told. There is a vernacular brick tradition in this country, dating from the fifties and still alive at the turn of the century, that has never yet been examined or appraised in any of the jejune histories that are available: so far as I know, no one has even written



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a paper about it. Yet all over the South there are business buildings, hotels, factories, in which the brick ornament that embellishes the plain wall is conspicuously good, and deserves to be regarded with a far more appreciative eye than people usually apply to it; but because these buildings are now often set in rundown neighborhoods and are covered by decades of grime, people simply do not distinguish between the essential structure and the accidents of age, misuse, or decay. As a result of our one-sided historic appreciation, our whole country is in danger of losing a precious part of its past—the work of the two generations that lie immediately behind us.

Too much of our appreciation of historic buildings in America, moreover, has been confined to the surface. This inquiry into our architectural tradition was prompted originally by the efforts of archaeologists, antiquarians, and historians to preserve for the future the bare frame and skeleton of the past; and since these inquiries began to take shape first in the eighties and nineties, it was natural, perhaps, that only a handful of early monuments was singled out, as a rule, as worthy of the antiquarian's attention. Much valuable work has been done in searching into old deeds, in dating this or that building, in making

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measurements and reconstructions, in carefully photographing the existing relics. Against all this detailed inquiry, however narrow its province, no word of protest can be raised: everyone must be grateful for it and respect the results that have been achieved. But there is a temptation to believe that the measured drawing of a façade or the photograph of a portico or a Palladian window has some significance in itself, or that if carefully noted it will give us the power to recapture the mood or the spirit that produced it; and it is against this mischief that the present lectures would first of all attempt to guard you.

Let us be clear about this. The forms that people used in other civilizations or in other periods of our own country's history were intimately a part of the whole structure of their life. There is no method of mechanically reproducing these forms or bringing them to life; and it is a piece of rank materialism to attempt to duplicate some earlier form, because of its delight for the eye, without realizing how empty a form is without the life that once supported it. There is no such thing as a modern colonial house, any more than there is such a thing as a modern Tudor house; if it is modern it is not colonial, and if it is colonial it cannot be modern. If one is lucky

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enough to inherit a building that was created in some past epoch, one may continue to live in it, with a minimum number of changes, just as one may continue to use ancestral furniture; for there is a core of essential needs that do not change radically from generation to generation. But if one seeks to reproduce such a building in our own day, every mark on it will betray the fact that it is a fake, and the harder the architect works to conceal that fact, the more patent will the fact itself be. The merit of Williamsburg today is that it is a vast outdoor museum: a museum that belongs to the twentieth century. Like a good museum it tells us much about the past. All its special virtues, however, are the virtues of our own time: scholarly research, scientific analysis, vast command of materials and energies, large-scale organization.

In short, we today can re-create in actual buildings everything that once existed in them, except the spirit that made them what they were. At that point we are helpless. The first automobile that honks in the distance reminds us that we are in another age; and the first time we attempt to stretch our legs in one of those formal upright chairs that were built in the time of Christopher Wren, for gentlemen who wore

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gigantic wigs and carried a sword, we will realize that modern manners and old furniture do not go together, since the ordinary lady or gentleman of the seventeenth century was accustomed to a degree of bodily self-control, aided by the upholstery and corsetry of their costume, which even an army on parade hardly aspires to in the present age. I have seen more than one delicate Chippendale chair broken by present-day users whose slipshod posture brought to bear against the back of the chair a pressure no one in the eighteenth century would have applied to it. People, manners, feelings, architectural forms, all go together; and the aim of every generation must be to remodel their inner and their outer world together, for the sake of a more significant and harmonious life.

The great lesson of history—and this applies to all the arts—is that the past cannot be recaptured except in spirit. We cannot live some other person's life; we cannot, except in the spirit of a costume ball, choose to re-live any part of the past. If we imitate the past, we do not by that fact resemble the past: we only declare to the world what we are at present, namely, people of enfeebled imaginations and limited capacities, who are given to mechanical

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imitation. But when one examines the buildings, the decoration, the furniture and silverware and china and costume of another period, not in order to obtain replicas or a copybook reconstruction, but in order to understand the pervading purpose of that age, one overcomes this mechanical and materialistic worship of dead forms, and one achieves something that is actually precious for our self-understanding and our self-development.

Now, just as one more or less consciously reads the face of every person one meets, to discover whether it is friendly or withdrawn, happy or sad, at home in the world or baffled by it, so buildings are the faces on which one can read, long after the events themselves have passed out of memory or written record, the life of our ancestors. In the present lectures, therefore, I wish to turn your attention away from the narrow antiquarian preoccupation with the past that has too often made architecture a mere record of sticks and stones; and I would direct your attention to the underlying social and personal interests that have played upon American architecture, and that have enabled the South, in particular, to leave an imprint on buildings far removed from their original home. Our task is not to imitate the past, but

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to understand it, so that we may face the opportunities of our own day and deal with them in an equally creative spirit.

Perhaps the most direct way of reversing the conventional task of architectural analysis is to look into the social background, the psychological character, and the guiding beliefs of the great creators. With this end in view I have taken as my chief subjects, for the second and third lectures, two great Southern architects, Thomas Jefferson and Henry Hobson Richardson. Each exercised an influence on his time. Each brought to a focus the great social and cultural forces of his period. Each created buildings that were to outlive, in their influence, the local scene and their immediate generation. The span of these two men's work, taken together, covers roughly a century; for Jefferson's career as a full-fledged architect really began with his travels in France and Italy in 1784, while Richardson died, at the height of his career, in 1886. Jefferson's buildings were one of the last expressions of those rational forms and classic ideals whose recapture marked the politics no less than the architecture of the eighteenth century. Jefferson is great enough, on every count, to stand examination of the most rigorous kind; and I purpose there-

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fore to rescue his work from the appreciation of those who have over-praised his weaknesses and who have, it seems to me, sometimes failed to point out where his true strength and merit really lay.

Like Jefferson, Richardson was a transitional figure; but the transition he makes is not that from a local vernacular to the international style of his period, but from the romantic attempts to resurrect the medieval idea, which characterized some of the great minds of the nineteenth century, to the expression of a thoroughly contemporary architecture, fully at home in the setting of modern industrial civilization, yet attempting, through the force of a great creative imagination, to transcend some of its limitations and weaknesses.

By some curious fatality, Jefferson's achievement was obscured to the generation that succeeded him; his work had much less influence for the next two generations than it should have had, and it is only in our time that any adequate survey has been made of its remains, or that any comprehensive attempt has been made to appraise it. And curiously enough, the revival of Jefferson's reputation and the revival of Richardson's have taken place almost within the same span of time. For Richardson, though he was uni-

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versally acknowledged during his own lifetime to stand head and shoulders above his contemporaries, suddenly slumped in public esteem after his death; and while he had exerted a powerful influence upon contemporary architects like Buffington and Sullivan in the Middle West, his reputation for long moldered in undeserved neglect. At long last in 1924 an obscure young critic of architecture, who had spent part of his training period during the World War in Cambridge, one of Richardson's great stamping grounds, and had grown to love the somber masses of Austin Hall in which he had learned the lore of a naval radio operator—this obscure young man made the first effort to restore Richardson's reputation and to show his importance in the development of American architecture and of modern form. Today, I am happy to say, no one of any consequence disputes the genius of Richardson as an architect, and only a few die-hards would contest the significance of his contribution to modern form.

Before I deal with the works of these two men, however, I should like very briefly to sketch in the outstanding features of the American scene toward the close of the eighteenth century, from the standpoint of building. What did the colonists bring, in the way



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of architectural forms, to the New World? What was waiting for them? What transformations did the scene work in their methods of building and their sense of form?

The first thing to remember, perhaps, is that the people who came to America did not magically transform their personalities as soon as their feet touched the earth of the new continent: they were still Spaniards, Dutchmen, Englishmen, Swedes, Frenchmen. There was no culture here that they respected sufficiently to take over as a whole. The hard pressure of necessity made them adopt eventually some of the Indian's ways; but it was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that a new frontier type emerged among the trappers and hunters. Not merely were the original American colonies outposts of Europe: they were actually closer in some ways to their medieval past than they were to the life that flourished in the courts and capital cities of contemporary Europe. Just as the colonization movement itself had in it some of the original spirit of the Crusades, so the new settlements resembled not a little the towns that were carved out of Northern Europe in the thirteenth century.

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These new settlers had, for the most part, no romantic love of the wilderness; and they were not at home in it: a century or two must pass before the white man felt secure enough to value the wilderness because it was wild and to turn his back on his fellows because his hard ego would conform to no other human will than his own. Whatever people saw or heard in this new land had value to them at first largely because it reminded them of Europe: in that spirit, you will remember, they called one of our American thrushes a robin redbreast, though one must be almost blind to both color and size before one can confuse the two species. It was natural, therefore, that the houses they erected, after the first hardship of living in caves or dugouts or huts, were houses of a definitely European pattern. North of Mexico, the architecture of the Indian counted for nothing: neither the tepee nor the Iroquois long houses left an impression on the new settlers. Even the log cabin was not a primitive adaptation to the forest culture: it came through imitation of the Swedes, who brought over their traditional form of log-building: a very convenient form, for both building and military defense, in the early days.

The gradual adaptation of European modes of con-

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struction to American climatic and technical conditions is one of the most interesting sides of our architectural history. Although houses of clapboard and shingle were known both in Holland and in England in the seventeenth century, it took some experience of the rigors of a Northern American winter before the half-timbered houses of typical Elizabethan design were covered over with an extra layer of clapboard, to prevent leakage and to preserve warmth; and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that our typical light frame construction, with an air space to serve for insulation, became a characteristic American form. That change awaited not merely the development of sawmills; it also awaited the mechanical production of cheap nails, to serve as substitutes for the heavy wooden pegs that were necessary, along with a cutting of joints, when heavy beams were in use. Recently I had occasion to raise the roof of the century-old farmhouse in which I live; and I was amused to hear the chief carpenter rail at the clumsy mode of construction used in the old house, in comparison with that which he was using; there was no antiquarian piety in his voice, for he knew—and he was right—that the mode of construc-

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tion now followed involves a smaller wastage of lumber and of man power, for a more effective result.

Since there was a complete dearth of professional architects, until Peter Harrison appeared in Newport in the middle of the eighteenth century, the designs of American buildings were usually drawn at second hand from the current pattern books of the period; and these designs were carried out with such local modifications as lack of labor, lack of materials, or lack of taste might suggest. These subtle changes are precisely what gives our early provincial work much of its freshness and charm. But the builders' concern with plans and layouts prepared for countries with quite different climatic and social conditions acted as a brake upon American invention. It is much easier to copy ornament than to find out all that needs to be found out about the geology, the soil, the climate, the working conditions, and the social customs of the neighborhood for which a building is designed; and the truth is that although there were many empirical improvements in American architecture to adapt it more closely to its environment, the conscious effort to make full use of regional resources and regional opportunities, in the design itself, goes back no farther than the eighteen-eighties.

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In some measure this judgment contradicts the popular notion about American inventiveness. Did not our early architects, from Jefferson on, experiment with new geometrical designs, like that for the octagon house, as a rational modern ground plan? Did not we improve the heating systems of our homes, first by the Franklin stove, then by a central hot air furnace, and then by steam or hot water heating? Is the skyscraper not a unique example of the force of the American imagination, making use of its peculiar opportunities, without a cramping regard for Old World precedents? I would not take away any luster from these inventions; but I would simply point out that they were, for the most part, as little concerned with regional adaptation as were the cruder plans and methods that were derived from the Old World. Take for example a capital matter: adaptation to our trying American climate, with the extremes of temperature that prevail in the North and the sub-tropical conditions that exist in large portions of the South. To achieve an architectural adaptation to these conditions is not a mere matter of adding a system for heating or cooling the structure: it is a matter of orienting it for sunlight and summer winds; it is a matter of differentiating the use and the amount of

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window space on the north and the south sides of the structure; it is a matter of providing a means of altering the amount of light and insulation according to the season of the year and the time of the day. Our current systems of air-conditioning are exceedingly crude and unbearably expensive, because architects have for the most part so little real insight into the facts of climate and weather in relation to human physiology: perhaps the most advanced technical adaptation that has so far been made was the old-fashioned slatted shutter, which controlled both the amount of heat and light that entered a room. The shutter was in effect a removable wall, until architects began to treat it as an ornament and fasten it permanently to the outside wall. If we are to have any conspicuous advance in the adaptation of American buildings to climate, I hazard the prediction that it will be along the lines opened originally by the use of the shutter, that is, by the provision of removable walls. In future, instead of conceiving of a building as built of permanent walls, broken by permanent windows, our architects will use the resources of modern fabrication to create houses with double or perhaps triple walls: one to control light, one to control heat, and one to control the entrance of living

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creatures, from insects to people. Such buildings will open or contract according to the season or the time of day, according to the demand of the occupants for privacy or for exposure, for retirement or for oneness with the outside world. Our climate, even apart from our social needs, requires such flexible forms of construction: yet for lack of regional insight our mechanical ingenuity has gone into absurdities like our present air-conditioning systems, which, if they were widely adopted, would in most parts of the country make an impossible demand upon the water supply.

The forms of building that prevail in any region reflect the degree of social discovery and self-awareness that prevails there.

With respect to materials the problem before the American architect was a much simpler one—if only because in the early days there was usually, in contrast to Europe, wood to burn. Perhaps the best part of our American architectural tradition, certainly the most homely part of it, reflects our expertness in using wood; and a recent observer of American architecture, the distinguished Swiss critic, Siegfried Giedion, has noted that the wooden clapboard house which has formed a stable continuous tradition for three centuries in America, has been more vital and more

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consistent than any surviving tradition in Europe. We shall see when we come to deal with Richardson that his understanding and his further modification of this tradition constitutes one of his highest achievements.

But with brick and stone the case was a little different. It took time to explore the resources of clay and stone; to test out their hardness, their ability to stand fire, their weathering qualities. Native resources are not always immediately visible; and when they are, there are often difficulties of transportation to overcome. Jefferson, for example, believed in the use of indigenous materials, and tried to use some of the local stone—a schist—for the capitals of his University of Virginia buildings. But he was disappointed: the stone proved to be coarse and crumbly, altogether unsuited to the refined carving he had in mind. A modern architect, faced with the same problem, might have altered the mode of ornament and exploited the coarseness itself as an indigenous quality. But given Jefferson's ideas of classical form, the very possibility of changing the mode of decoration simply could not have occurred to him. So he procured marble from a distant quarry, even as he reached across to Italy to import a couple of Italian stone-carvers, to cut these capitals.



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You will note that even in the use of materials, to say nothing of much more complicated adaptations, the regional attributes of architecture do not at first disclose themselves. People often talk about regional characters as if they were the same thing as the aboriginal characters: the regional is identified with the rough, the primitive, the purely local. That is a serious mistake. Since the adaptation of a culture to a particular environment is a long, complicated process, a full-blown regional character is the last to emerge. We can see this very plainly in wine culture. It is only after hundreds of years of planting grape vines and making wine, that the people of Burgundy, say, developed the grapes that were specially fit for their soil; and it needed much further sampling before one patch of soil could be distinguished from another, by reason of subtle differences of flavor in the wines. That kind of co-operation and re-adaptation and development is what is necessary to produce a truly regional character. The very last refinement of regional culture in wine-making is limited perhaps to an acre or two of ground; and centuries were needed before the grape, the soil, the skill in wine-making and the sensitivity in wine-tasting were brought into a harmonious partnership. The right

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grape is not always indigenous to the spot where the best wine can be made. It takes generations before a regional product can be achieved. So it is with architectural forms. We are only *beginning* to know enough about ourselves and about our environment to create a regional architecture. Regionalism is not a matter of using the most available local material, or of copying some simple form of construction that our ancestors used, for want of anything better, a century or two ago. Regional forms are those which most closely meet the actual conditions of life and which most fully succeed in making a people feel at home in their environment: they do not merely utilize the soil but they reflect the current conditions of culture in the region.

Now still one other error must be guarded against, and this is the notion that the regional should be identified with the self-sufficient or the self-contained. As far as sociologists can find out, there has never been a human culture that was entirely self-contained in both time and space: those cultures which have been nearest to this condition have been extremely primitive and have ranked low in their capacity for self-development. This is another way of saying that every regional culture necessarily has a universal side

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to it. It is steadily open to influences which come from other parts of the world, and from other cultures, separated from the local region in space or time or both together. It would be useful if we formed the habit of never using the word *regional* without mentally adding to it the idea of *universal*—remembering the constant contact and interchange between the local scene and the wide world that lies beyond it. To make the best use of local resources, we must often seek help from people or ideas or technical methods that originate elsewhere. These outside influences must usually be modified; they must always be assimilated. Sometimes they are too numerous, as was the case with the various religious cults that Imperial Rome sought to take to her bosom; sometimes they are too overwhelming, as was the case when highly organized machine industry wiped out the handicraft industries that might often have survived on a basis of local service, but could not compete with the machine in a distant market. But the drama of human development centers in part on this tension between the regional and the universal. As with a human being, every culture must both be itself and transcend itself: it must make the most of its limitations and must pass beyond them; it must be open to fresh experi-

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ence and yet it must maintain its integrity. In no other art is that process more sharply focused than in architecture.

During the long colonial period, new influences were coming into European society that were bound to have an effect upon the whole architectural scene, almost as much in the New World as in the Old. One of these great influences was the invention of printing: a process which was applied not merely to the reproduction of words, but likewise to the reproduction of black and white images. Victor Hugo called the Cathedrals of the Middle Ages the stone book of mankind, and said, somewhat fancifully, that they were destined to be supplanted once the invention of printing had been made. What happened in fact was something a little different. The stone books began to supply material for the printed books, particularly the stone books which told the great story about the civilizations of Rome and Greece. And in turn printed books, illustrated with carefully made drawings of ancient temples and triumphal arches, began to affect the design of the new buildings. From the sixteenth century on the architectural examples people found in books impressed them more than their own traditional forms of building: the ancient past, paradoxical-

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cally, seemed fresh and modern, whereas the immediate past seemed fusty, old-fashioned, and ridiculous. At all events, no one thought of measuring or copying or reproducing the local, vernacular architecture.

Henceforward, the traditions of masons and carpenters, handed on from father to son, from master to apprentice, were supplemented by older prescriptions, derived either from a direct study of the buildings or from the book on architecture written by the Roman architect, Vitruvius. Architects, instead of rising in their profession out of the building trades themselves, were drawn more and more from the guilds of painters and jewelers; and their new mode of building, based on the precedents of the classic world, gained favor with the well-bred gentlemen and ladies who read and admired these books. Some of these new-fangled architects were men of superb technical competence, like Brunelleschi and Bramante, like Borromini and Sir Christopher Wren; but despite these individual examples, there was a general shift from the traditions of the builder to the traditions of the painter, and from the problems of organization and construction to problems of painting and formal composition.

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The influence of the book, in short, was to undermine the authority of the living tradition out of which the endlessly varied and fertile architectural achievements of the Middle Ages had grown: it threw emphasis back upon a remote past; so that by the eighteenth century the very word Gothic, which had been coined to describe rather loosely the whole period that began with the so-called Dark Ages, had become a mere swear-word by which people threw contempt upon the achievements of their ancestors—achievements that now seemed to them crude, barbarous, and, above all, illiterate: because they spoke the wrong language. These traditional forms, it is true, were not so easily downed: much of the spirit of the Middle Ages continues to live in the exuberance of the baroque architecture of Southern Germany and Austria; architects like Wren, in the seventeenth century, built indifferently in both the baroque and the Gothic forms; and the diarist, John Evelyn, a distinguished amateur, describes his own admiration for both the classical and the medieval traditions. But the social institutions that had given life to medieval building were fast waning; and by the eighteenth century the Middle Age was far enough away to be a sub-

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ject for a revival, which in time was to vie with the classic revival.

The return to the classic past has usually been interpreted as a literary and esthetic movement; but it was much more than that. This dependence upon the book in architecture, this desire to root out local and traditional styles, was part and parcel of a more general social impulse that led to the exploration and colonization and conquest of Asia, Africa, the Americas. This new style of building was one that required no knowledge of local resources, or local traditions: with the aid of a builder's handbook, one could carry these new forms into the heart of the wilderness and be at home anywhere in the world: all that was necessary was to make the local builder imitate, as best he could, what people were building in London, in Paris, in Rome. With the aid of a cornice, a pediment, a column, a portico of classic origin, the colonist could feel at home: these classic forms served almost the same purpose as the traditional dinner coat that the Englishman is supposed to wear, even when dining by himself in the lonely tropics: they helped maintain the morale. To be at home was to live in that ideal world which had been conjured up out of archaeological research into Rome, and, in the eight-

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eenth century, Greece. Is it any wonder that these classic forms spread from the Cape of Good Hope to Samarkand, and from Lima almost to Labrador? These newly discovered forms were colonial in a very special sense: they were exported ready made, as it were, from the old country.

By repeated use and by steady adaptations, the revived classic forms tended to become traditional; and I have no doubt that the respect for established mathematical proportions among the imitators of Roman work helped train the eye of even the common carpenter; so that his feeling for a good division of space remained even in the more humble farmhouses which made no effort to reproduce the elegant designs of the upper classes. As soon as that schooling ceased, as it began to around 1840, the proportions of common buildings suddenly became awkward, even when classic ornamentation remained; and though one cannot demonstrate the fact, there is probably some connection between those two events. I would say, indeed, that the greatest benefit brought about by the classic revival in architecture was the schooling it gave to the eye. An able architect I know, who has a great love for the traditional forms and methods, tells a story that illustrates this. He lives



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in the summer on one of those islands off the Massachusetts coast where the old traditions have never really died out; and once he decided to make some additions to his house and made a series of very careful drawings, based on the old models, to guide the carpenter in his work. He came back from the mainland one day, when the job was nearly finished; and when he went past the new wing, he overheard one carpenter talking to the other. "Look here, Jim," said the boss, "we'd better have a look at those plans and see if she checks up." So they began poring over the plans and then taking the measure of the various dimensions of the interior, the distance between the windows, their height, and so on. Both the men seemed pretty well satisfied with their work. "By cricky, who'd ha' guessed it," said Jim, "the architect was right!"

There is one other attribute of so-called Renaissance architecture that has been too little noted by those who admire it: this is its mechanical basis. All the main elements of a Renaissance building are repeating elements. On any particular floor the windows are standardized in their dimensions and reproduced: the columns are standardized and reproduced: the lintels, the moldings, the cornices, are likewise stand-

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ardized. Every part of the building can be reduced to a mathematical order; and whatever can be reduced to such order, is, by and large, ready for machine production. Ruskin's great complaint against Renaissance architecture was that the worker was condemned to follow accurately, with servile obedience, the carefully written directions and working drawings of the architect. This, said Ruskin, is an architecture of despotism; and he was correct. Unconsciously, one foot of this new order was already in the machine age.

But of course there are gradations of despotism, from the relative decency of a Louis XIV to the unmitigated corruption and brutality of a Hitler; and when the builder was pressed for time, or when he lacked training in form, the patterns provided in the new architectural pattern books were doubtless a blessing. We do not think any the worse of the quilts and coverlets of our ancestors because they were based on common patterns, worked out first by people blessed with special ingenuity and skill. Standardization for quantity production or wide reproduction is not necessarily a bad thing: quite the contrary: whether it is good or bad depends upon at what level the standard itself is set, and above all how fully that

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standard meets the human needs for beauty and fitness and order. The adaptability of classic designs to mechanical reproduction cannot be overlooked or slighted: it was one of the facts that brought the new classic buildings into closer harmony with a mechanical age than the more traditional handicraft methods of the medieval builder. But there is an underlying kinship, in the eighteenth century, between the new factory, with its mechanical order and discipline, and the new palaces and country houses. Scrape off the superficial decorations from the façades of the winter palace at St. Petersburg and behold!—you have a factory building.

Plainly, then, it was because of this kinship, because of the identity in their underlying impulses, that the classical styles were a true expression of the eighteenth century. The love of Roman forms was a sort of esthetic bait that led the spirit, most willingly, into this mechanical trap. Beneath it all was the love of regularity, order, standardization, measurement, mechanical reproduction, a love which had first become visible in early capitalism, with its emphasis upon accurate accounting and standardized coinage. The humanities were, so to say, a preparation for the inhumanities: classic order paved the way for a more

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purely mechanical order: the despotism of the royal courts made people ready for the no less ruthless control of the new kings of coal, cotton, and steel who have dominated the last two centuries.

This mechanized and standardized order in architecture, however artfully disguised, was to leave its mark on American building. But before it could affect any large part of the scene, the classical impulse itself had mainly dwindled away, and the mechanical forces, growing more powerful, had produced an increasingly raw and brutal type of industrialism. Fortunately, too, the developing American desire for freedom and independence, not unhappily abetted by ignorance, encouraged American builders to take many minor liberties with the patterns that they found in their manuals. We will see that Thomas Jefferson, though he drafted the political Declaration of Independence, did not take kindly to architectural independence. More than once he poured contempt on this free and easy way of behaving toward the classic canons: mere building did not, for him, deserve the elevated name of architecture. And yet we will find Jefferson's own work at its best when he permitted his rational and utilitarian interests to modify, in the interests of practical effectiveness, the high-

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flown designs he had taken over from the great monuments of Rome. And we will find one of his most serious mistakes, perhaps his only mistake, in designing the University of Virginia, came from his uncritical respect for classical models, without concern for the contemporary use they must serve. This is a significant contradiction; and I trust that my second lecture will help to explain it.



## LECTURE TWO

### THE UNIVERSALISM OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

In the last lecture I tried to give a general picture of the forces that were at work in American building during the first two centuries of its existence. Now we are going to proceed from generalities to particulars, and we will examine how these forces affected the mind of a man who was not merely one of the molders of free government in this country but one of its very greatest planners and architects. I would not, of course, distort this picture by pretending that Jefferson's contemporaries were as much affected by his architectural achievements as by his political views. His role as an architect was rather that of a gifted amateur, who is amiably favored by his friends and neighbors, as a person with a talent for cooking may be called upon to prepare his favorite dish, though no one thinks of asking him to come regularly and cook the whole dinner. Fortunately, both the place and the time furthered Jefferson's kind of talent.

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Long ago I described Thomas Jefferson as one of the last true figures of the Renaissance; and I return to that definition now, because it calls attention to the fact that he was the rounded man, the man of well-developed capacities in a variety of fields, who was the object of humanist education at its best. The description also points to the fact that his strength lay equally in the arts of building, agriculture, and government, the main fields of activity for a progressive gentleman of the eighteenth century. There was none of the medieval theologian about him; none of the merchant or the speculative adventurer or the industrialist; the very fact that he died almost in penury is a proof of his freedom from the moneymaker's obsessions. Economically speaking, he was a landed proprietor whose sympathies were with those who worked the soil; and he would have been more at home with the great figures of the early Renaissance than he actually was with many of his own contemporaries. He would have been an eager companion for Leonardo, because he shared many of his interests in mechanical ingenuities; he would have been happy in the company of Alberti or Palladio, because he shared their respect for the great monuments of Latin civilization; he would have been a loyal colleague of



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Descartes in the seventeenth century, because his mind was at home with geometrical demonstrations.

The creation of the all-round man in America was not purely an ideal of education; this Renaissance gentleman was superimposed, by necessity, upon the Jack-of-all-trades that every American had more or less to become, as the price of survival, once he left the few established centers of industry and culture that dotted the seaboard, and faced life on the frontier. Justice has perhaps never sufficiently been done to the many-sidedness of the pioneer, to his capacity for being hunter and farmer and veterinary and lawyer and soldier and smith all in one; for though the Jack-of-all-trades is usually master of none, he may acquire something better than professional expertness: he can become master of himself, and the sense of self-reliance so achieved may more than make up for his lack of specialized training in any one trade or profession. Jefferson inherited this double tradition: that of the gentleman who works for the love of it, and that of the versatile pioneer who must turn his hand to anything, since if he cannot do the job, no one else is going to do it for him.

We today have such exacting requirements for the practice of all the professions, that we are often

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tempted to regard the rounded Renaissance education as hopelessly superficial; we wonder how Jefferson could have been a good lawyer if he spent so much time thinking about his farm at Monticello, or we ask ourselves how he could have been a good architect, without having served his due apprenticeship in an architect's office. There are two answers to these doubts; at least as concerns Jefferson's architecture. One of them is: Go examine his buildings. And the other is to note the fact that a good part of the architects of the Renaissance were amateurs: they were masters of the art of drawing, rather than masters of the craft of building. Jefferson, indeed, had the advantage over a great many professional contemporaries in that he was forced to carry on his technical education at the same time that he was designing his building; for he had to train the Negro workmen on his plantation to execute the jobs. Jefferson learned the craft of building by the best of all pedagogical methods, that of Dickens's schoolmaster, Squeers: by putting his book knowledge directly to the test of practice day by day.

Jefferson's architectural education began in the year of his marriage, 1772, when he built a little one-room cottage to receive his bride, in the midst of the

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almost impassable wilderness that then surrounded Monticello; and the building of the house upon which he acquired most of his architectural education, before he began to supply designs to his neighbors and relatives, took something like thirty years before it was even tentatively completed. Not all of Jefferson's buildings took so long to finish: Edgehill, which was begun in 1798, was actually far enough done to be occupied in 1800; but in designing and re-designing his own mansion, Jefferson made the most of the fact that the owner, the architect, and the builder were combined in one person and responsible only to each other. Monticello was his school and also his joy, his recreation. He was an architect because the art of building fascinated him and offered him the most immediate of rewards: the pleasure of creation. By building and re-building Monticello Jefferson had acquired an intimate knowledge of architecture that few professionals, at that time in America, could boast.

Up to 1784, when he went abroad, Jefferson's sole contact with the architectural works of the past had come through books: they exercised on him a double charm, for they conjured up a vision of something perfect in the midst of a civilization that was rough and unfinished in its outward forms; and they satis-

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fied his great love for an environment in which human reason had triumphed over habit, caprice, and empty custom. By taste and training of mind Jefferson was disposed to look down upon the vernacular architecture that had sprung up in America, and that was reaching a new plateau of inventiveness and rational order, just at the moment that Jefferson paid his first visit to his mother country. There is something paradoxical about his aversion to these simple forms, and we must try to understand it. If we think of Jefferson primarily as a democrat, it will seem strange that he ignored or despised the sober, straightforward houses, with big windows, decent proportions, delicately modeled doorways, that were being built in both America and England at this time. Here was a true architecture of the people: severe, chaste, free of stale ornaments and foreign affectations, an architecture that formed unified façades and street pictures, in which more distinguished buildings could be set off.

But we know that Jefferson had no high regard for this architecture; indeed he had no patience with it. Not merely did he ignore such fine plantation houses of an older day as Tuckahoe and Stratford in Virginia; but he looked upon the great mass of contemporary work in England and America as rude and

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provincial; he even called the buildings of William and Mary College "mis-shapen piles, which, but they have roofs, would be taken for brick-kilns." And the fact is that though Jefferson hated titles and disdained the airs of an aristocracy, he embodied to his marrow the beliefs of an eighteenth century gentleman; and one of these beliefs was the conviction that the art of building had reached its final pinnacle in Rome; so that any building that did not pattern itself on the monuments of the classic past, both for proportion and for ornament, was, to the very extent that it fell away from these standards, a debasement. These views were not peculiar to Jefferson; they were shared by a good part of his more active and progressive contemporaries. Their love for classic architectural forms went hand in hand with their renewed respect for classic political models. Jefferson and his contemporaries saw this classic past through a glass which purified it of its corruptions and miseries; they were aware of the classic temples of Rome but not of the tenements and slums; they admired the Pantheon without restraint, but if they remembered the vicious barbarism of the circus, from which Nero's contemporary, Seneca, found himself turning away in deep self-disgust, they were more interested in the shapes

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of the stones than in the revolting sights those stones had witnessed. For Jefferson the classic past represented the very principle of order and beauty; what had been achieved in the great days of Rome was final; and only by repeating that achievement could reason actually prevail. This rationalism had become ingrained in the French mind, and Jefferson, even more than Franklin, came to think and feel like a Frenchman: above all, like a disciple of Descartes.

The high point of Jefferson's trip to Europe, architecturally speaking, came with his visit to Nîmes in Southern France. For here, in one of the northernmost centers of the old Greek culture, he beheld a classic Temple, the so-called *Maison Carrée*, in a state of remarkable preservation; and his words about it have a touch of ecstasy that break through his usually deep reserve and upset his tranquil matter-of-factness. "Here I am," he wrote to one of his correspondents, the Comtesse de Tesse, "gazing whole hours at the *Maison Carrée*, like a lover at his mistress"; and Jefferson suspected that the natives mistook his esthetic absorption, his solitude, for the moping melancholy of an ill-starred lover who is about to commit suicide. It was on the basis of his contact with the veritable classic sources, at Nîmes, that Jefferson pre-

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pared his plans for the Richmond State Capitol. They were not carried out precisely according to his designs; and through unimaginative parsimony the setting that Jefferson had proposed in the first bill he introduced to the House of Delegates in 1776 was not provided. But having beheld the real thing, as it seemed to him, in Nîmes, Jefferson wished to transport it intact to America, precisely as he was concerned to transplant mulberry trees and grape vines and upland rice. Was this impulse a sound one? We shall not be able fully to appreciate the crowning achievement of Jefferson's life, the University of Virginia, if we hesitate to ask this question, or fail to answer it candidly.

Now there are two elements in every architecture, indeed in every esthetic or cultural expression. One of them is the local, the time-bound, that which adapts itself to special human capacities and circumstances, that belongs to a particular people and a particular soil and a particular set of economic and political institutions. Let us call this the regional element, though one must of course include in this term far more than the purely geographic characteristics. The other element is the universal: this element passes over boundaries and frontiers; it unites in a common bond peo-

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ple of the most diverse races and temperaments; it transcends the local, the limited, the partial. This universal element is what makes it possible for us to read Homer today, and to feel as sympathetic toward Odysseus as we do to a contemporary refugee who is buffeted from one country to another, or to enjoy the encounter of Nausicaa and Homer's battered hero, with perhaps even a little greater relish than one does the latest situation between a Hollywood actress and her male counterpart in a current motion picture. Without the existence of that universal element, which usually reaches its highest and widest expression in religion, mankind would still live only at the brute level of immediate impulses, sensations, habits; and there would be a deep unbridgeable gulf between the peoples of the earth.

Jefferson believed that the forms presented by classic architecture were of this universal and eternal nature. Though Jefferson was a patriotic American, a model of selfless devotion to his country, though he was a Virginian of the Virginians, the style that he sought to acclimate to his local soil was in fact neither American nor Virginian. His designs were conscious attempts to escape a provincialism which he openly despised; they were efforts to bring to America the



“international style” of the eighteenth century. We now realize that part of Jefferson’s fervor for the classic past was misplaced. He was taking the architecture of temples and palaces, quite exceptional buildings designed for special purposes connected with the religious cult and the political forms of ancient states; and he was attempting, as in the Richmond Capitol, to put these ancient forms to quite different purposes from those they had actually served: so far, I believe, he was mistaken. But Jefferson was right in thinking that there are universal principles, underlying an architecture, that must be sought out and understood; he was right in thinking that the best is none too good for one’s own soil, and that if the best can only be found elsewhere the intelligent course is to import it and adapt it rather than to put up with the third-best and pretend that it is just as good. Jefferson was right, too, in thinking that the language a building spoke was as important as its practical offices: for in plan, in volume, in mass, and in detail, a building tells what was in the designer’s mind; and it is important that the observers and users should be able to understand that language, and sufficiently moved by it to accept it as their own.

What Jefferson did not realize, merely because he

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was immersed in his own age and could not view it in perspective, is that two kinds of universal language were now being spoken in architecture: a dead language, that of the classics, and a live language, that of the machine. There were many institutions in the eighteenth century that had an underlying harmony with Roman civilization; slavery was one of them and despotism was another; but the power of the ancient world over the human imagination was already waning, and men were beginning to have a fresh confidence and pride, a fresh will to create, based not on the achievements of the past but on the possibilities of the future. This new order, founded upon mechanical invention and standardized production, upon the physical sciences and their applications, was not actually remote or foreign to Jefferson: he was too much a man of his own period to despise its comforts and conveniences. No one can do justice to Jefferson, either as a human personality or as an architect, who does not realize how much at home his mind was in the scientific and mechanical and rational order. He had no wish to make money out of it; but he accepted its preoccupations. It is not an accident that the McCormick reaper owes its ultimate invention to a train

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of thought started in Jefferson's mind while seated in a barber's chair to have his hair cut.

Unfortunately, Jefferson accepted the current notion that the mechanical and utilitarian are by nature unbeautiful; and that the architect must therefore endeavor to hide as far as possible the practical aspects of existence. In this complete separation of soul and body, he was a true disciple of Descartes. Like his English contemporaries, he concealed the practical offices of the farm and dissociated them from the house. This went so far as to have the kitchen at a distance from the house, in a separate building, with the food brought to the dining room by an underground passage. Such planning was tolerable only in a leisured society like that he enjoyed at Monticello. Jefferson's guests would sit down to dinner at four o'clock and not rise till seven, when the ladies, who had left when the table was cleared for wine, returned at seven with a tea tray.

Those who know Monticello even today will remember how his mechanical ingenuity and his practical scientific interests always threaten to break into his serene classic order. The ingenious cannonball calendar for telling the days of the week is hardly an esthetic embellishment to the front hall; and the

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sheltered weather vane in the porch, though a convenience for an owner who did not want to step out onto the lawn in inclement weather, was artful rather than artistic. All these mechanical improvements were fun; make no doubt of that. Some of them were really admirable, like the two-way dumb-waiter, which brought a full bottle of wine up from the cellar to the dining room, while the empty bottle was going down—or, with somewhat wider application, like the mechanism which opened or shut both doors of the drawing room when one pushed only one of them. A man who had an eye for such mechanical details was obviously living as intently in his own age as a Connecticut Yankee; he was not merely dreaming about the noble but defunct empire of Rome. But Jefferson unfortunately was not able, in terms of his philosophy, to accept the fact that the new universal forms provided by the machine needed a new soul: that these forms must be expressed in a fresh esthetic language. Where he could not conceal the mechanical elements he employed, he was unable to assimilate them into the esthetic design. That was a weakness. But it was an understandable weakness; for it took architects the better part of a century to awaken to the fact that in the machine modern man had created

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a new world: a world that cried to be understood, interpreted, and humanized.

Besides his interest in mechanical ingenuities, however, Jefferson was possessed by another passion for which his architectural faithfulness to the precedents of Greece and Rome gave no scope. That passion was a love for the New World itself: not merely a pride in its political government, but an intense scientific interest in its aboriginal background, in the native animals and plants, in the ways and customs of the Indians. He spared himself no effort to collect books about the New World and to assemble specimens, for the benefit of foreign naturalists, of its native species—sometimes at great cost to himself. A man who was as much possessed by American themes as Jefferson was could scarcely avoid making some allusion to them in architecture. Very possibly it was through Jefferson's influence that Latrobe chose to carve the capitals in the new capitol building with ears of corn, instead of acanthus leaves; but Jefferson went much farther, not in his architectural ornament, but in what he did to his classic structure after it had been erected. We tend to forget the actual appearance of the entrance hall of Monticello in Jefferson's lifetime. Let me describe it for you in the

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words of a young contemporary of Jefferson's, George Ticknor:

"You enter by a glass folding-door into a hall which reminds you of Fielding's 'Man of the Mountain' by the strange wealth of furniture on its walls. On one side hang the head and horns of an elk, a deer, a buffalo; another is covered with curiosities which Lewis and Clark found in their wild and perilous expedition. On the third . . . was the head of a mammoth, or as Cuvier calls it, a mastodon, containing the only *os frontis*, Mr. Jefferson tells me, that has yet been found. On the fourth side, in odd union with a fine painting of the Repentance of St. Peter, is an Indian map on leather of the southern waters of the Missouri and an Indian representation of a bloody battle handed down in their traditions. Through this hall—or rather museum—we passed to the dining room."

Now it was altogether fitting that these indigenous trophies and curiosities should have had a place in a house designed by a man as devoted to them as Jefferson was: they reflected a very vital concern in his life. What was disharmonious, what was in fact a little jarring, was that the structure itself had absolutely no relationship to this indigenous back-

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ground. Plainly, there was no harmony of any kind between the two: the buffalo head and the mammoth's bones were, from the standpoint of the classic decoration, mere disfigurements—as savage and out of place as a German warrior, wrapped in bearskins, would have been in the streets of Rome in the time of the Antonines; or rather more so. In his architecture, Jefferson did not do justice to his pride in his native land; he did not create a background which fittingly embodied it, in contemporary terms. To a visitor, the hall looked like a mere museum. The native element appeared among these imported architectural forms as an intrusion: raw, barbarous, unassimilated. But in reality, it was the classic past that was the intruder; and it was contemporary America whose spirit cried to be represented in other forms than those of extinct mammoths.

Apparently, it was too early for Jefferson, too early perhaps for anyone, to absorb fully those lessons of the earth and sky and people of America to which Thoreau and Whitman turned themselves in the following generation: hence one of the deepest realities of Jefferson's life made its way into his home covertly—in the form of museum specimens, rather than by changes in the form of the building itself.

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Yet though neither the mechanical nor the regional elements were integrated in the design of his structures, in other departments of building Jefferson was fully abreast with the demands of the opening age. This is clear if one examines the floor plans of Monticello. The plan of the second Monticello, the one Jefferson began to build after his return from Europe, by ruthlessly tearing down the existing building, derives directly from the Villa Rotunda designed by Palladio, which Jefferson greatly admired. But when one compares Jefferson's building with Palladio's, one discovers that his admiration did not lead to a blind copying of the Italian example: however genuine Jefferson's respect for the older master, the plan and the elevation were both brought into close conformity with the new needs. Palladio's plan for the Villa Rotunda is rigidly symmetrical: one element balances the other with mathematical precision. Except for the halls approaching the central unit, there is no special means of circulation between the rooms; and there is no differentiation of the rooms on the plan, according to their presumable use: every element is abstract, formalized, indifferent to everything but the outward effect. Such an abstract design is always at its best before the building has been



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spoiled by the presence of people—but it has no meaning for a house that is to be inhabited by a household where men and women eat and drink and talk and read and fall ill and are waited upon, and now are sociable or again want some quiet corner to which they may retire in completest solitude and privacy.

Jefferson's plan for Monticello, on the contrary, is already a modern plan: a plan which reflects the needs of the living and embodies those needs in well-organized space. The great drawing room of Monticello is on the axis of the hall; its bay projects onto the porch, and its ample windows embrace the view beyond. On the right, by the drawing room, are a dining room and beyond it a tea room; these rooms, which are different in size and shape and treatment, are separated by a passage from two bedrooms, placed side by side on the entrance side of the house. On the left side of the hall, as one enters, is a sitting room; this is connected with Jefferson's own room by a library, which has no counterpart in the divisions on the right side of the plan. Because of his desire to imitate classic models, Jefferson concealed the upper floor, which forms a mezzanine rather than a full floor, behind what looks to be a one-story façade: but even this close organization of the plan

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on a single level also marks Jefferson's plan as both modern and American—a prototype of the apartment, and the bungalow, if I may couple it with developments so remote from Jefferson's own intentions. The point that I would drive home to you here is that Jefferson, while searching for universal forms in his best work did not lose sight of the local and the particular: in Monticello one feels that every exposure, every outlook, every domestic arrangement has been studied and re-studied; that the house is based not merely on regional knowledge but on intimate domestic knowledge as well.

I do not propose to go over Jefferson's buildings and alterations one by one; for it is not by the mere bulk of his work that we can gauge his great qualities or understand how far he was able to solve the problem of meeting and expressing new needs, in a civilization whose building materials and methods of construction were still almost wholly traditional. By the time Jefferson retired from the Presidency, he was ready for the great work of his life; and it is on that great achievement and its meaning for us today that I wish now to direct your attention.

✓ In every respect, the University of Virginia was the crowning episode in Jefferson's life: the seal of his

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conviction as a statesman and a political philosopher, the proof of his greatness as an architect. The University itself was one of his most persistent dreams; for he wished his native state, in his own words, to "give every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his daily business . . . and, in general, to observe with intelligence and faithfulness all the social relations under which he shall be placed." We know that Jefferson, while a student at William and Mary, had come directly under the influence of three redoubtable tutors, who stood in the relation of friends, whilst he was still a student; and Jefferson, from the beginning, had it constantly in mind to create a series of buildings which would, by their very spacing and arrangement, favor the intimate kind of relation between professor and student by which he himself had profited.

Here we have, I think, one of the reasons for the imaginative sweep and formal clarity of Jefferson's design for the University. Almost all great works of art—I think one may safely generalize—have a long period of hidden gestation. They do not arise out of sudden and superficial demands that come from the outside; they are rather the mature working out of inner convictions and beliefs that the artist has long

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held, has mulled over, has perhaps sought to embody in preliminary essays. In short, the artist must live with his form, so that it becomes flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, before he can start it on its independent career. Jefferson began his plans for the University with no formal structure, like the *Maison Carrée*, in his mind's eye: he began, rather, with the program of the new university, as a place in which professors and students would become partners in the exchange and pursuit of knowledge; and his problem was not to imitate a Greek temple or an Italian villa or even an Oxford college; but to find a fresh form which would mirror his purpose. In a letter to Governor Nicholas of Virginia, dated April 12, 1816, Jefferson wrote: "I would strongly recommend . . . instead of one immense building, to have a small one for every professorship, arranged at proper distances around a square, to admit of extensions, connected by a piazza, so that they may go dry from one school to another. The village form is preferable to a single great building for many reasons, particularly on account of fire, health, economy, peace, and quiet." Those were the words of a man who had a firm grip on every part of his problem.

The few precedents that existed in America did not

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hamper or guide Jefferson: the separate collegiate buildings of Harvard, Princeton, or William and Mary did not impress him: he made a clean departure from the current tradition. Nor was Jefferson influenced by the medieval quadrangles of Oxford, with their cloistered quiet and their carefully guarded enclosures. In the richness of his old age, his architectural thought had become purposeful and integrated, sure enough of its foundations to permit him to create a truly native form. Though he drew upon his architectural acquaintances like Dr. William Thornton and that excellent professional Benjamin Latrobe, what he sought were only specific suggestions for details: the main lines were already laid down in his mind. His letter to Dr. William Thornton, dated May 9, 1817, leaves no doubt as to this:

“We are commencing here,” he wrote, “the establishment of a college. Instead of building a magnificent house which would exhaust all our funds, we propose to lay off a square of seven or eight hundred feet, in the outside of which we shall arrange separate pavilions, one for each professor and his scholars. Each pavilion will have a school room below and two rooms for the professor above, and between pavilion and pavilion a range of dormitories for the boys, one

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story high, giving to each a room 10 feet wide and 14 feet deep. The pavilions about 36 feet wide in front and 26 feet in depth. . . . The whole of the pavilions to be united by a colonnade in front, of the height of the lower story of the pavilions." A few of these details underwent change: the distance between the rows was reduced from 800 to 200 feet, with both an esthetic and a social gain; and Jefferson, finding that not all professors were bachelors, had to provide bigger quarters for the professors' families, with four private rooms instead of two; but the main outlines of the scheme remained.

In designing the University Jefferson had the opportunity he had lacked in the Richmond State Capitol. Not merely was he constantly at hand to supervise the work, but he began with an adequate site, and from the beginning was able to control the use of the site no less than the individual designs of the buildings. Here again his common sense and imagination triumphed over his bias toward purely geometrical figures. As a lover of squared paper, he was inclined to favor the checkerboard plan in the design of cities; he had even thought of combating the plague of yellow fever by building cities on a literal checkerboard plan, in which only the black squares would be used

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for building and the white ones left open, in turf and trees. When the ancient site of Babylon was re-discovered and its strictly rectangular plan was brought to light, Jefferson had hailed it as a model and thought it should serve as a precedent for Washington: indeed, he never fully reconciled himself to L'Enfant's starlike pattern of radial avenues which were superimposed on that design. Fortunately, not merely was Jefferson forced to narrow the space between the rows; he was also forced to meet a drop in the land by building low transverse terraces. This slight irregularity, this modification of pure form to meet the exigencies of life, adds to the esthetic effectiveness of the plan itself.

If the palace of Versailles was one of the first examples of an open order of planning, in which the building stretched in a straight line, instead of making a quadrangle or a court, the University of Virginia buildings are the first, as far as I know, in which this kind of open plan was repeated in four parallel rows, of equal length. Here was a better suggestion for city planning than the suggestion for an open checkerboard, which Jefferson had made to Volney in 1805. This form of planning is what the Germans now call *Seilenbau*, which merely means build-

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ing in parallel rows open at the ends; and during recent years it has almost become a symbol of modern town planning, since, if the buildings are properly oriented, it permits the fullest exposure to sunlight and the freest exposure to the prevailing winds and the view. But Jefferson's open rows have a characteristic feature that most modern forms of *Seilenbau* have not. The dormitories, instead of stretching in unbroken lines, are punctuated by the houses of the professors, which also contained the classrooms; or, on the further ranges, the students' rows are broken by the individual boarding houses, in which the students boarded. This interruption of the uniform façade is logical: it is functional; and it is esthetic; in other words, it embodies Sir Henry Wotton's often quoted definition of the essentials of architecture: commodity, firmness, and delight. No one of these reasons alone would have been sufficient to make the rows the masterly architectural achievement that they are: it is the conjuncture of all three, and their perfect embodiment in the buildings themselves, that establish their success.

I would emphasize, even at the risk of being tedious, how much the beauty of the University of Virginia depends upon Jefferson's insight into the human



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needs that these buildings serve. That is obvious, for example, in the very intimate scale of the colonnades, with their succession of low arches; there is no effort to blow up this attractive architectural feature into monumental proportions. But it should be even more obvious when one sees how the principle of designing the college on a village pattern, rather than a palatial institutional one, leads naturally to breaking up both the professors' houses and the boarding houses into separate buildings.

Note how Jefferson avoided that characteristic monstrosity of our more recent American colleges, the huge dining hall; noisy, institutionalized, barracks-like. He provided, again in his own words, for "six hotels for dieting the students, with a single room in each for a refectory, and two rooms, a garden, and offices for the tenants." That introduces into the business of eating, a human, an intimate note; eating under these circumstances must have lent itself to conversation and friendship; and it probably lent itself likewise to a better sort of life for the people who cooked and served the food, and were by reason of the human scale, on more amiable terms with the boarders. As a member of a college building committee, I have fought to establish that principle in mod-

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ern American practice; and though I have so far fought in vain, I am convinced that Jefferson was right, right both as an architect and as an educator; and that if we are interested in the whole process of education, we will pay as much attention to the conditions under which students eat, as we do to the conditions under which they take physical exercise; though it is the cultivation of the whole personality rather than the body alone that should be our main object in "dieting" the students.

The one place where Jefferson went wrong in the design of the University of Virginia was where he lost sight of his own fundamental principles, and as a result committed even an esthetic error. Jefferson, in his deference for high architectural authority, took over Latrobe's suggestion for a central domed building which should close up the axis and dominate the group. His original plans made no such provision: both ends of the rows left the landscape open to the eye. And though he had the good sense to transform Latrobe's proposed auditorium into a library, the scale and character of the building—the Rotunda—are entirely out of keeping with the village plan that Jefferson so wisely had in mind. Granting that a library building was a necessity, it

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would have been better sense and better architecture to have treated it as an integral part of the rest of the design; one can imagine a central stack room, with wings to serve the special departments of knowledge and provide more intimate reading and study alcoves—all conceived on the scale of the pavilions and dormitories, with such appropriate changes in windows and lighting as the storing and reading of books would naturally suggest. Such a building would have completed the design of the rows: whereas Jefferson's attempt to reproduce the Pantheon, despite its more modest scale, is entirely out of keeping both in design and in bulk with the modest buildings that were erected; neither in its original form, nor in McKim, Mead and White's reproduction, is it anything but an awkward overgrown structure, which mars the general picture and could not from the first, in the very nature of its composition, serve its own function adequately.

The library is the only real weakness, however, in the whole conception; in every other respect the design is a masterpiece. For if the plan and the general order were good, the execution of the details was no less admirable. Jefferson designed each of the professors' pavilions to be a replica, as far as

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possible, of some noble classic temple; in order that the students of architecture might have a model of the best taste of the past always before their eyes. Though his purpose here has ceased to be relevant, the actual effect is still charming: the variations he introduced in those buildings, now with a flat, now with a gabled roof, now with small, superimposed columns for the front porches, now with a full-scale temple portico, the austere ancient pattern sometimes broken in the balconies by a diamond pattern or a Chinese fret—all these variations on the central theme are music for the eye. The pavilions, again, lost some of that bleakness and gawkiness that the austere temple form sometimes has in the American landscape, by reason of the fact that they are supported by the low horizontal façades of the dormitories. The success of these buildings applies even to the smallest details. Consider his famous wall, with its undulating curves; this was an astonishing piece of virtuosity; for it is only one brick thick; and by laying a series of arches on the ground, as it were, he not only gave an interesting ripple of movement to what was otherwise just a barrier, but provided a sheltered, twice-warmed place for the more tender plantations.

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In short, the University of Virginia was the marvelous embodiment of three great architectural essentials. The first was a well-conceived and well-translated program, based upon a fresh conception of the functions of a modern university. A good building serves as the physical and symbolic setting for a scheme of life: to build well, the first step is to understand the purposes, the motives, the habits and the desires of those who are to be housed. Architecture, if it is to be anything better than scenery painting, must be evolved from the inside out; and the architect must therefore begin, not with the labor or the structure, but with the needs that the land and the structure are finally to satisfy. Unlike modern millionaires, who so often put up collegiate buildings for the pleasure of seeing their names on the façades, and who imagine that the more money they spend, the more highly their names will be edified, Jefferson began with certain definite convictions about the needs of students and scholars. Hence certain modesty and economy of detail; hence respect for human proportions. Although Jefferson spent freely when the need arose—I have told how he imported stonecutters from Italy to carve the capitals—there was no splurging in these buildings.

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if one perhaps excepts the unfortunate library. Jefferson had a carefully thought-out program; and he carried it through.

The second great architectural essential is that individual buildings should never be conceived as isolated units; they should always be conceived and executed as parts of the whole. Buildings exist in a landscape, in a village, or in a city; they are parts of a natural or an urban setting; they are elements in a whole. The individual unit must always be conceived and modified in terms of the whole. This cannot be done by architects who have their nose on the draughting board, and who, in their own conceit, have no regard for the principle of neighborliness and no interest in the surrounding works of nature or man.

A certain discipline, a certain restraint, even a certain sacrifice of private tastes and preferences is necessary if an individual is going to develop a positive character: people who do what they like, when and how they like, are not merely a nuisance to their neighbors, but they turn out to be weak characters, to boot. It is the same in architecture. The beauty of the University of Virginia buildings that Jefferson designed does not lie in any single de-

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tail; it does not lie in any single building; it does not even lie in any single row: it derives from the order and purpose that underlies the whole and creates a harmony, practical and esthetic, between its various parts. That is a lesson which the architects and builders largely forgot in the two generations that followed Jefferson's death. To pick up that tradition and re-instate it has been one of the main tasks of our own time, and it is one that is still only imperfectly performed.

The third great quality that Jefferson showed was his ability to modify details to meet a special situation, while holding to a rigorous and consistent plan. This is a quality that has special meaning for us today; for we are too often the helpless victims of the very mechanical order we have created. Now Jefferson was as much enamored as our most machine-minded contemporaries of regularity, of mathematical proportions, of mechanical accuracy; and his readiness to make departures from such order, when necessity arose, is one of the proofs of his mastery. Geometry satisfies a deep desire of the human mind: the desire for order, certainty, regularity, for form and stability in a world of flux. When this order is embodied in building, it satisfies the mind

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that man is for the moment on top and in control of the situation. But that victory of order always has its dangers, as the Greeks, who so well mastered geometry, were aware: the danger is that it may flout human needs, as completely as Procrustes did when he chopped off human legs in order to make his guests fit the beds they were to sleep in. Life without order is chaotic; but order without life is the end of everything, and eventually the end of order, too, since the purpose of order in building is to sustain human life. In the University of Virginia, Jefferson struck a balance between formal order and vital order, between the logic of building and the logic of life. And that is why this achievement of his ranks, not merely as one of the highest achievements of American architecture, but as one of the high points of architecture anywhere in the world in the nineteenth century. It dwarfs all of Jefferson's other buildings. It puts the work of his contemporaries and successors for the next fifty years distinctly into third rank. If Jefferson's achievement here had been studied by his successors with some of the reverence and love and understanding that it has belatedly received, the course of American architecture might



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have been appreciably changed; and changed, of course, for the better.

The fact that Jefferson's achievement as an architect was not appreciated raises historical problems of the first dimension for students of American life. How is it that the great buildings at Charlottesville were so long without practical influence? Is this merely because, like Ramée's earlier design for Union College, in Schenectady, they were too remote from the centers of architectural taste? That is hardly an adequate explanation. How is it that Jefferson's significance as an architect was so little appreciated that in a short while the buildings that have been proved, by documents, to have been Jefferson's were freely attributed to another amateur, Dr. Thornton, or to Jefferson's young assistant, Robert Mills? How is it that the force of this great architectural personality so far waned that scarcely a word appears to have been written about Jefferson's career as an architect until Herbert Adams, an historian, not an architectural critic, published a monograph on his work in 1888?

There are doubtless various incidental explanations of this neglect; but none of them goes very far. The remoteness of Charlottesville, the change of

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taste, the growing love for romantic disorder and for Gothic forms, the habit of treating Jefferson solely as a political symbol of democracy—all these contributed to the neglect of Jefferson's great eminence as an architect, and to an indifference to his own greatest monument. It is only today that we can see Jefferson with open eyes for what he really was: an outstanding personality, whose spirit and example still are significant to us for the very reason that they were important to him—as the “author of the Declaration of Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia.” Through those words, through those buildings, Thomas Jefferson continues to address his countrymen in a language that we all can understand. Through Jefferson, the rationality, the republicanism, the sense of a common human destiny, which marked that period, still speak to us. Those qualities are more fully alive today, now that they are so wantonly defamed and so brutally challenged by the totalitarian powers, than they have perhaps ever been before. They are part of that universal contribution which the South, through Thomas Jefferson, has made to Western Civilization.

## LECTURE THREE

### THE REGIONALISM OF H. H. RICHARDSON

There are many people in this audience to whom the name of Henry Hobson Richardson is perhaps entirely unknown. A few perhaps will recognize him as an architect, who flourished in the seventies and eighties of the last century; but the chances are that even if they are old enough to have heard of Richardson's work, they will be a little ashamed to admit any familiarity with it, lest they seem to convict themselves of being hopelessly identified with a buried part of our architectural past. Yet Richardson was one of the towering world figures in architecture during the nineteenth century; and the recovery of his name, the reinterpretation of his work, have not been due to any musty love for the more disreputable part of America's past in the arts, like that which impels people to collect whatnots; but it has been due rather to quite another fact—the growing recognition that in Richardson's work the firm foundations

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of a modern architecture, at home in its age, at home in this country, were at last laid. His influence on architecture in America was comparable to that of William Morris on the domestic arts in England; but unlike Morris's it was based more confidently on the forces available in the nineteenth century and, instead of toying lovingly with archaic forms, it reached out vigorously into the future.

If only a few of you perhaps recognize Richardson as an architect, I should hazard the guess that still fewer would—except for his position in these lectures—recognize in Richardson a Southerner: for he was cut off from his native soil through the misfortunes of war, and none of his buildings was built nearer to the South than the borderline city of St. Louis. But it would be careless for a historian of American culture to forget for a moment that Richardson was born in Louisiana and spent his entire boyhood and early youth in New Orleans. So I bring back to you the name of a Southern architect in whose achievements every American has a special cause for pride. In a period when for the South life was, in Sidney Lanier's bitter words, chiefly a matter of not dying, Richardson's personality and work were a veritable fountain of vitality. His exuberance, his

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strength, his indefatigable energy, his superb mastery of both buildings and men, translated itself into solid works of the imagination, powerfully conceived and powerfully executed. He was the Paul Bunyan of American architecture: a man who in his own lifetime assumed legendary proportions. Had he remained alive another twenty years, the period of sterile imitativeness and pompous imperialism that began in architecture with the World's Fair of 1893 in Chicago, might not have conquered so easily or lasted so long.

Richardson was born on the Priestley plantation, in the Parish of St. James, Louisiana, in 1838; and his mother was Catherine Caroline Priestley, a granddaughter of the famous Dr. Priestley, the experimental philosopher who discovered oxygen, the radical whose views about the French Revolution provoked the ignorant to riot and drove him from his home in England to America. Before Richardson left Louisiana, his bent of mind was already established: he showed an interest in drawing, which was fostered by the best teachers available in New Orleans, and he had already evidenced a love for mathematics—always a useful trait in a young architect.

Like so many of the promising youth of the South,

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at this period, Richardson was destined for the army, and through Mr. Judah P. Benjamin, who was a friend of his father's, he got the chance of a cadetship at West Point. But Richardson had an impediment of speech, from which he suffered throughout his life; and this made him unfit for military service: hence he matriculated at Harvard; and in 1859, having been graduated, he went abroad to France, to become the second American student to study at the Ecole des beaux-arts in Paris. He took up his work there in 1860.

With his French background in New Orleans, it is not surprising that Richardson should have sought to pursue his architectural studies in Paris, which was then pre-eminent in both the teaching and the practice of architecture: but this is perhaps the only point where his kinship with Jefferson becomes a positive one. Paris was Jefferson's finishing school as an architect; and it was in the South of France that his imagination was kindled. But the difference in their temperaments was so profound that each looked at a different aspect of France, each cherished a different fragment of its ancient civilization, each carried away a different image of the order to come. Richardson was too poor to go to the South of France

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while he was a student; for his family fortune, which had kept him going, vanished in the catastrophic conditions of wartime New Orleans. But if he had gone South, he would have been conscious, not of the Greek temples, but of the Romanesque churches. Richardson's Paris was the Paris of Victor Hugo and Viollet-le-Duc, the great medievalists; and though Richardson took part in a riot of protest over the appointment of Viollet-le-Duc to the head of the Beaux-arts, he did so as a loyal student, upholding the autonomy of his school against bureaucratic dictation, not as one who was insensible to the lessons that Viollet-le-Duc was then preaching, with such zeal and such scholarship. Only primitive sources, Viollet-le-Duc said, supply the basis for a long career; and once Richardson got past the finger lessons in planning, construction, and design, it was to the primitive sources of medieval architecture, in Syria and in Southern France, that he naturally turned for a starting point.

Before going into Richardson's achievements, it will be profitable, perhaps, to describe his character and background in a little more detail, in contrast to Jefferson's; for the two men were in every way the exact opposites; and each sums up not merely a dif-

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ferent period but a different type of personality: indeed it is partly the preponderance of one or another of the types of personality represented by Richardson and Jefferson that gives to a cultural epoch its distinctive cast and flavor. Jefferson was the incarnation of the Age of Reason. He had the rationalist's love of clarity and measure; his mind was at home in law, politics, invention, in matters where it was thought well to keep the emotions out of the picture, as far as possible, lest they distort practical judgment. Order and measure had for him a definite esthetic appeal: these qualities, which seem so distasteful to the romantic mind, because they are based on abstract rules and formal relationships, undoubtedly made him feel a warm appreciative glow. The spare upright figure of Jefferson, with his unobtrusive urbanity and courtesy, his inner reserve, is a close match for his buildings. Colorful freehand sketches for his buildings are not what one would look for from Jefferson; and the fact is there are no such surviving memoranda; but on the contrary, there are pages of neat plans, ruled drawings, many of them done on squared paper, covered in a careful hand with calculations of materials needed and costs.

Richardson's temperament was of an entirely dif-



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ferent cast—just as his rapid freehand sketches, in which the building is felt as a whole before it is re-organized and re-modeled by more exact analysis, are profoundly different from Jefferson's neat drawings. If Jefferson was the man of reason, Richardson was the man of feeling and emotion: a man whose eyes reveled in color, whose fingertips delighted in textures, whose architectural forms were in a way the extension of his own bodily structure. Richardson was a man of Gargantuan frame, with great physical capacities and great appetites, built like a bison: a man of generous vitality who ate much and drank much, in an age that had ceased to regard gluttony as one of the deadly sins. When he passed through the streets of a foreign city, with two equally huge companions, the little street urchins thought that a circus parade had started and wanted to know when the dwarfs were coming. If William Blake was right in saying that Energy is eternal delight, Richardson was, through the sheer exuberance and overflow of his energies, a veritable mountain of delight; and as with maturity his energies waxed, in both the physical and the spiritual spheres, his architectural forms expanded accordingly. Apart from works of contemporary engineering, like the Eads Bridge and the

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Brooklyn Bridge, it is in Richardson's architecture that one first receives a dramatic expression of the fact that man, thanks to his mastery of coal and steam and iron and electricity, was now for the first time in control of colossal energies—far greater than those the builders of the Egyptian pyramids had wielded by marshaling together vast armies of slaves. His smaller buildings give one this sense no less than his great swaggering structures, like the Pittsburgh jail, where the stones that compose the arches are eight feet long, and all the other elements are in proportion.

No human being is ever free from emotion: so that what is important in the arts is the degree to which human emotion is exhibited, modulated, or repressed. Jefferson's reserves were deep. It was second nature for him to conceal his emotions. One day, when he returned from visiting a great disaster that had happened to his estate—the bursting of a costly and irreplaceable dam—Jefferson treated the event in such a casual way that his house-guest did not have the faintest sense of the extent of the calamity until he left Monticello and heard the event discussed gravely by the people in Charlottesville. That was characteristic of the man. When Richardson, on the other

hand, was chosen by the committee of the Springfield Church to execute his first important commission, he burst into tears on being informed of his success: unashamedly full of emotion because he at last had a chance to demonstrate his powers. By innate temperament Richardson was a full-blown example of the Romantic; and he was at home, therefore, in those periods of culture where vitality had counted for more than formal order or restrained ceremonial in daily life.

Fortunately for his success as an architect, fortunately, too, for his relations with his own industrial age, Richardson finished off his architectural training as a draughtsman in the office of Henri Labrouste, perhaps the foremost exponent of French rationalism in the middle of the nineteenth century. Labrouste's Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris, built between 1858 and 1868, had used iron and glass far more extensively than they had ever been used on a comparable building; and thanks, perhaps, to Labrouste's influence, Richardson never shared the fashionable romantic contempt for contemporary problems and contemporary materials. Nevertheless, if he was called upon to make a choice between beauty and convenience, where not enough resources were available

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to make due provision for both, he resolutely held out for the fullest measure of beauty, because the feelings and emotions attached to the contemplation of beauty were in some sense sacred for him. Yet for the better part of ten years, Richardson's temperament was restrained by the current conventions in architecture. It took him all that time to formulate a more personal idiom.

In my last lecture I tried to indicate the underlying unity between classic architecture and the new type forms and mechanical methods that were transforming industrial production in the Western World. The romantic movement, which furnished the background for Richardson's early work was in essence a cry of protest against both the classic and the mechanical impulses: it recognized an enemy to life and feeling in both these philosophies. In reacting against rational, ordered forms, the romantics sometimes almost discarded form completely: in landscape gardening, for example, not merely did the leading theorists attempt to simulate wild nature, but they preferred irregular shapes to regular ones, even when they appeared in trees: dead branches, twisted stems, tangled foliage, were emblems of protest, not only against artificiality, but against art

itself. This protest came chiefly from the middle classes: it was associated with a feeling that the old sanctities and pieties of religion were being threatened alike by the pagan culture of the Renaissance and by the mechanical inhumanity of the machine.

But there was something paradoxical about the protest. By serving as a counterweight to a brutal industrialism, it helped that industrialism to prosper: when life got too hot in the factory or the counting house, romanticism offered an exotic retreat for the private soul in artful Gothic cottages with nooks and towers, and in neo-Gothic churches. By making out of the architecture of the Middle Ages a fixed ideal, a standard for all later works of piety, as Pugin did in England and Upjohn in America, the romantics repeated the great mistake that the lovers of the classic had made during the Renaissance. Recognizing that the forms they loved were produced by a certain type of life, they mistakenly hoped that the reverse process was also possible, so that by recovering these forms they could make real once more the life that had first created them.

Unfortunately, dead forms do not produce living organisms. People who attempt to restore the outward form of tradition really deny both the validity

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of tradition and the integrity of the society in which they live. Worse than this: when the romanticists did this, they were in fact using the past as a master-mold from which to obtain mechanical reproductions for the present; so that in the very act of trying to escape the machine, when they were protesting most strenuously against it, they were nevertheless succumbing to its influences. If the freedom and vitality and rich emotions of romanticism were to count for anything, that freedom must mean emancipation from the Middle Ages, no less than from the classic or the Renaissance world: in other words, to be real, it must mean freedom to continue to experiment, to explore, to live the life demanded by their own times; since there is no logical reason why old castles and grist mills should be romantic objects, and suburban houses and factories should be altogether lacking in spirit, in taste, in imagination. So, too, the romantic must enjoy vitality wherever he finds it—not just in traditional forms and in earlier ages.

Most romantic architects never came to grips with this situation. They arrived at a compromise worthy of Dickens's famous architect, Mr. Pecksniff; whereby they applied their medieval formulas only to insti-

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tutions that had some traditional connections with the past, like churches and colleges and upper class homes; and they held aloof from buildings that were crying aloud for more imaginative treatment—the steel bridges and the office buildings and the railroads and the factories that characterized the new age. There were exceptions to this rule; but they only established, more clearly than ever, that Gothic forms could not be conceived in cast iron nor adapted to the culture of the iron age without both defacing the past and laming the future. The romantic theorists, for the greater part, were convicted in practice by their own doctrines; for they were right in holding that there is an organic connection between the forms of an age and the rest of its culture—its religion, its economic organization, its political institutions, its moral disciplines, its sense of the human personality; and therefore any formula that denies this contemporary connection is condemned to feebleness and sterility. Architectural forms, to be valid, must not merely be beautiful but timely. When the architect himself fails to understand and to command the forces with which he must work he only adds to the sum total of visible disorder.

By the time Richardson started work in America,

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in the late sixties, architectural anarchy had reached a point at which disorder had resulted almost in physical brutality, and ugliness conducted a constant assault and battery wherever one turned one's eye. When one beholds some of the famous buildings of the period, one must charitably assume that they were built by the blind for a generation that dwelt in darkness. Yet this period had established, by violent reaction against the past, a coarse vigor and a self-confidence in its own lights, which are necessary for any kind of architectural creativeness. By 1870, the words "novel" and "unique" were a recommendation in architecture; and so ignorant were people generally of the most elementary standards of esthetic cultivation, that they were open to originality, to a degree that better-educated people usually are not; and they were prepared, precisely because their taste was so lawless and indiscriminating, to welcome good architecture just as heartily as they appreciated the bad, simply because they did not know the difference.

For the first decade of his active life as an architect, Richardson's work was little above the level of contemporary taste: he, too, used the fashionable mansard roof; he, too, built churches with spires



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like a salamander's tail; his eye, too, still failed with elementary proportions, so that his narrow tower on the Worcester High School was almost painful, and even the main building of the Buffalo General Hospital, though it shows the beginnings of a new strength, was awkward in its proportions, and its high towers lack the base he finally achieved only in his famous Trinity Church in Boston. But this Richardson grew by leaps and bounds. One can scarcely believe that the Worcester High School and the Brattle Street Church in Boston were built by the same man, though only a few short years separate them. Yet it was not till the end of the seventies, with the building of Sever Hall in Harvard Yard in 1878 that Richardson, partly through experience, partly through intuitive understanding, began to understand that the old romantic formulae were fit only for the scrap heap and that a new task lay ahead of the architect. There was no use in the architect's wringing his hands over the imaginative beauties of the past: he must face the future and embody the life of his own people. His task, as Emerson said in one of his aphoristic verses, was to "give to pots and trays and pans grace and glimmer of romance." Warmth, color, imagination, in other words, do not

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depend upon the architect's working in a special style or with a special type of building: they are qualities that the good architect, who has command of both his materials and his human resources, can bring into every kind of work. Emotion cannot be imported into an architectural form by imitation of historic ornament or style: it must be felt and lived by the architect; it must govern his choice of materials, influence the rhythm of his composition, and be worked out in fresh terms, which belong to the age and place and pattern of culture in which the architect works. In other words, the emotional response and the rational response cannot be separated. "The beautiful rests on the foundation of the necessary." One must earn the right to have sensitive tastes and feelings by facing the practical tasks of one's own day.

Richardson's first biographer, Mrs. Schuyler van Rensselaer, did well to remind her readers that Richardson "was born a creator, not a student, an innovator, not an antiquary. Feeling for the vital serviceableness of his art was very strong within him, and therefore he cared more to work on new than on traditional lines. What he loved best was the freshest problem. What he most rejoiced in was to give true

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yet beautiful expression to those needs which were wholly modern in their genesis, and had hitherto been overlooked by art. No architect so endowed as to be very strongly attracted by ecclesiastical work would have been likely to say what I once heard Richardson say: "The things I want most to design are grain elevators and the interior of a great river steam boat." It was in the design, indeed, of new types of building that Richardson discovered his own sources of original design. It was in an entirely new kind of structure, the small town library and the suburban railroad station that his art first came to its perfection. Working through such forms, Richardson step by step threw off the old tags and the old ornaments, analyzed boldly the new functions to be performed by these buildings, and translated them into stone, brick and wooden forms that had both an inner logic and an outward shape of their own. In the five years between 1878 and 1883 Richardson emerged as one of the first architects of the modern age, one of the first who had found, in the commonplace occupations of the day, a source and an incentive for architectural creation. Richardson died in 1886—too early to have experimented with steel frame construction. But he did more than any other

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creative architect to prepare the imagination for that event.

Though Richardson's architecture was countrywide in its influence, though some of his best buildings are in Chicago and Pittsburgh—the Glessner House in Chicago and the Pittsburgh Court House and Jail—his work was deeply affected by the particular part of the country, New England, in which the first full opportunities for work were given to him. He interpreted that New England to itself and gave it a better sense of its own identity: he modified its Puritanic austerities: he gave to its buildings a color that they lacked: a color derived from its native granites and sandstones, from weathered shingles and from the autumnal tints of sumach and red oak that linger longer in the countryside of the North than any other colors. Richardson knew this part of the country too well, and loved it too heartily, to be deceived by the superficial whites and grays in which its older wooden houses, and even its brick buildings, like the State House in Boston, had been decked.

Richardson's somber autumnal colors went well with the period in which Richardson worked: they prevail so universally in the painting and the architecture of the period that I have called the period

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between 1865 and 1895, in imitation of the late Thomas Beer, the Brown Decades. One hears the sad notes of the aftermath of the War between the States in the novels of William Dean Howells as well as in the poetry of Lanier. It was a period of triumphant industrialism and rampant commercial enterprise, loud, spectacular, and vulgar: thousands of young men and women poured into the new industrial cities, to make their fortunes and to fritter away their lives. Whatever solidity and stability there had been in the country in the period before the war, now seemed to have vanished, or almost vanished, precisely in those sections of society that seemed most busy and successful. But the stern provincial culture of New England kept its grip for a generation: indeed the encouragement and opportunity given to Richardson was a proof of its integrity. And Richardson, in turn, gave back to his adopted region a reassuring sense of stability and strength in the series of buildings he designed.

Because Richardson delighted to use big stones with rough surfaces, or even, where glacial debris was at hand, to use enormous knobby boulders—as in the lodge on the Ames estate—one may misinterpret his love for these forms as a mere effort to

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re-instate a more primitive architectural past. The contrast between Richardson's big stone building and the light delicate constructions possible in modern architecture even serves to obscure, to some students, the essential continuity in spirit between Richardson's forms and those of later architects. Even a sympathetic and able critic, Montgomery Schuyler, once wittily said that Richardson's dwelling houses were not defensible except in a military sense. But the fact is, I believe, that Richardson was not merely purposefully dramatizing the energies of the new age: he was also trying to supply to the cultural life of his period some of the rugged masculine strength that he missed: he was as tired of an effeminate and puling architecture, as Walt Whitman was of effeminate and puling poets. And instead of succumbing to the patent instability of commercial enterprise during the Gilded Age, Richardson pitted his own solid powers against it: even his office buildings, like the great Marshall Field building in Chicago, look as if they were built for eternity. In these structures Richardson seems to say defiantly to his contemporaries: Tear this building down ten years from now—if you can!

This dramatization of power and stability awak-

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ened an answering note in the breasts of his countrymen; for commissions poured into Richardson's office, from 1880 onward: his appeal, in his own generation, was a universal one. People of taste admired his work because he brought into the somewhat arid, conscientious rationalism of New England a color and warmth that had hitherto been lacking. Here was an architect who called together the best contemporary sculptors and painters he could lay hands on, William Morris Hunt, who had studied with Millet, John La Farge, who had the Orient and the Occident at his fingertips; and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the best of the younger sculptors; and under Richardson's tutelage a whole generation of craftsmen learned to build and carve in a fashion that had begun to die out, even in Europe, after the middle of the nineteenth century. At the same time, Richardson's work appealed, with no less trenchancy, to the lowbrows of his period: it met with equal success among the heavy-fisted gentlemen who were staking out the new American empire and binding it together in a web of steel rails and copper telegraph wires and white ticker-tape. There was a reason for this double success; for though the conscious aim of these Robber Barons, as Mr. Matthew Josephson has

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called them, was money, they were still close enough to the realities of the farm, the mill, and the factory to have a taste for buildings that talked to them in direct, simple terms they could understand. It was not the least of Richardson's architectural triumphs, that he made these creatures of carboniferous capitalism, these gigantic lizards and armored reptiles of the Industrial Age, feel at home in his buildings: they liked him and even fed out of his hands. They admired the indubitable masculinity of Richardson's architecture: it had a kinship with their own vitality, with their own kind of swagger. In the long role of Richardson's buildings there are little more than a handful of churches: homes, railroad stations, libraries, offices and public buildings, chiefly claimed his interest. This alone would be enough to separate Richardson from an earlier romantic architect, like Richard Upjohn.

Viewing Richardson's work as a whole, indeed, it is plain that his romanticism was a matter of ingrained temperament, based on a rich and copious emotional nature: his was not an architecture of escape. Quite the contrary: no one better confronted his age than Richardson did; no one exhibited more vigorously the strength to meet that age halfway and



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yet not be downed by its sordid vices, its contempt for beauty, its indifference to humanity. In Richardson's buildings the historic quarrel between the Utilitarian and the Romantic was for the first time resolved; for if Richardson was the first romantic architect to embrace, by creating fresh forms, the railroad station and the office building and all the other rising phenomena of the Industrial Age, he was also one of the first of those who served the machine to see that industrialism must be transformed by human purpose and by human feeling if it is adequately to serve modern man. Beauty, Richardson demonstrated, was not something that could be added to a purely practical structure, as a cook might use an icing to decorate a cake, or even to conceal the defects of a burnt cake: but it was rather something that must be worked into the whole architectural form from its very inception, and it must therefore rest on a warm, intimate knowledge of the function of the building. Handsome is as handsome does is the motto of this kind of design.

I have referred to Thomas Jefferson as an exponent of a universal order in architecture, as one of the chief exemplars of the international style of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and in

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contrast, I have characterized Richardson as a user of regional resources and as an interpreter of regional characteristics. And there is a patent sense in which this contrast is a true one. Both in his choice of materials and in his development of certain parts of the native New England tradition Richardson was our first true regional architect. It was Richardson who first made full use of the local quarries of New England—Milford granite, brown sandstone, Longmeadow stone, employing both the color and the texture of local stones in a way that gave them a new architectural value. It was Richardson, again, who took the traditional white cottage or farmhouse of New England, with its clapboard or shingled sides and its shingled roof, and who transformed this early type of house into the wide-windowed cottage, with its ample porch and open rambling rooms that embodied a new feeling for both the landscape in which it was placed and the requirements of domesticity. Richardson was not entirely alone in furthering this development; there were contemporaries like W. R. Emerson who were working along the same general lines; but under Richardson's hands the new type of shingled house reached a pitch of esthetic excellence which makes it one of the outstanding achievements

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in our whole architecture: even the colors he introduced, weathered browns, autumnal reds, and sage greens, brought it into harmony with the New England landscape. Here Richardson takes up the theme of the sumach and the red oak, the sweet fern and the lichened rock, the pine tree and the butternut; and by using their colors in subtle combinations he created country houses that belong as much to the autumnal or spring landscape, as the traditional white farmhouse does to the snowmantled winter one. One of the most successful of Richardson's cottages cost only \$2500 to build. That is a test of the architect's imagination: his ability to accomplish much with modest means.

The thing to note about Richardson's cottages is that they were both a continuation of the established wood tradition, and a fresh creation within that form. But whereas our traditional farmhouses had their counterparts in England and Holland, Richardson's cottages belong wholly to their native soil. Now the land and the building were in complete harmony. One could never mistake these buildings for anything but what they are: New England homes. They belong to their setting in the same fashion that Robert Frost's poems belong to it. This indeed is the

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essence of a regional architecture; it is composed in such a fashion that it cannot be divorced from its landscape without losing something of its practical or its esthetic value—or both together. These cottages of Richardson's are, in addition, a proof of another important fact: that Richardson's success was not based upon ponderous forms of construction nor upon his mastery of a single material. Just as in Sever Hall in Harvard Richardson showed, more brilliantly than anyone had ever done in America, the inherent resources of brick, so in these vernacular cottages he showed the resources of a light framed construction with a shingle covering, entirely without ornament. More than any other architect he took advantage of the freedom of wooden construction, not alone in the planning of the rooms but in the wide range of sizes and shapes he used for his window openings.

In short, the handful of unpretentious country houses that Richardson designed not merely deserve to rank with the very best of his work: they were the best examples of an entirely native architecture that America could show before 1900. It is a vast pity that Richardson could not have made a similar essay to interpret the needs and possibilities of a regional

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architecture for the South; yet I hope I am not guilty of any base flattery if I say that, though this is regrettable, some measure of his success in New England surely derived from his original sense of family and place that came with his Southern heritage.

But in another sense, Richardson was much more than a regional architect. No less than Jefferson himself, Richardson was searching for a universal form; he was attempting to create a consistent and logical way of treating any architectural problem that came his way. One of his first visible efforts to align his more romantic inheritance with the needs of his own day came through his gradual discarding of ornament: particularly on the exteriors of his building. This was a departure of radical significance: the more radical in the eighteen-eighties when the word bare—as bare as a barn, as bare as a factory—was a synonym for ugliness. When Richardson built a railroad bridge, the masonry supports were as clean of ornament as the wholly utilitarian iron railings at the top; and when he built still another bridge in the Fenway in Boston, a superb example of his fresh feeling for masonry forms, that structure, though entirely of stone, depended only on his simple treatment of mass, contour, and texture for its esthetic

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success. The flaring curve of its piers is one of the high points of architectural form in bridge construction: it makes one regret that Richardson never had the opportunity to show his art in a great structure like the Brooklyn Bridge.

Instinctively, Richardson realized that his architecture must harmonize with the ever-spreading forms of the machine: therefore a certain economy, a certain sparseness, a certain rigor were needed even in his most traditional structures. This new sense of modern form comes out fully in the Glessner House in Chicago. This is an E-shaped structure, formed about an inner courtyard. There is an almost complete lack of windows on the main street façade: only narrow openings to light the halls. And why? Because the street was noisy, dusty, and intrusive; and because, by turning his openings away from the street, Richardson threw all the rooms onto the quiet courtyard and garden, with a maximum of privacy, solitude, and beauty. He felt no need for any kind of decorative flourish to mark this building as a human dwelling: one had only to put one's feet inside to discover how thoroughly the plan and disposition of the rooms furthered the purposes for which they were intended. Today's descriptive word for this guiding principle

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is functionalism. It is one of the universal attributes of modern architecture.

As Richardson's architecture matured, he approached steadily to rational and universal forms: even in his most regional architecture, he established principles of design that were of far wider application. Much as he loved the simple solidity of a stone wall, he realized in his bones that the age of steel frame construction and continuous windows was approaching; and in one of the last of his buildings, the Pray building in Boston, he deliberately subordinated the solids, brought the windows out to the walls to form an almost continuous surface of glass between the narrow brick piers, up and down the façade. This design was already, in form if not in construction, an anticipation of the logical treatment of the skyscraper: in this building, Richardson was actually ahead of the architects in New York and Chicago who were professedly building skyscrapers, without their having the faintest notion of how to express the structure. In fine, Richardson transcended by his actual development as an architect all the descriptive tags the architectural historian would apply to him. He began as a romantic architect, but he was far more than that; he became a regional architect;

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but he was more than that; and in the end, he was an able utilitarian and rational architect; but *precisely because he had never lost his romanticism and his regionalism*, he was also far more than *that*. It was indeed by his robust combination of all these elements that Richardson achieved a unity and completeness that few architects in the nineteenth century possessed. No other architect so well embodied his age; no other so well transcended it, as Richardson did in the best buildings of the last eight years of his life. Richardson's work was in a true sense an integration of all the dominant forces in his period; not merely the practical forces, but the spiritual and cultural forces.

So it was not the Romanesque style of architecture, but Richardson himself, who turned out to be the primitive source of modern architecture, at least in the United States. Was it any wonder that his architecture, demanding as it did a great personal capacity for embracing the most diverse and even contradictory forces of his age, was so often caricatured by his smaller contemporaries, who imitated the bare forms and had no insight into the mind that had created them? Richardson had not a few talented disciples in his office; some, like Stanford White, had



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left him even before he died: but none was strong enough to carry on his work, once the master himself could no longer give the lead and guide the outcome. But by the same token, it is not strange that Richardson's spirit, becoming manifest during the eighties in the few great buildings he built in Chicago, had a powerful influence upon the brilliant young architects of the Middle West; and in particular, that it should have affected the most original and able of them—Leroy Buffington, Louis Sullivan, and John Wellborn Root. Eventually, through the early work of Howard and Maybeck, it was to have a direct influence upon the present generation of San Francisco architects.

With the consequences of Richardson's work, with his bearings upon the architecture that followed, with his remoter meaning for us in the future, I purpose to deal in my final lecture. It is hard to part with Richardson, however, without recording a regret, as profound as it is vain, that he did not live for another decade, to carry his work to a final stage of fruition. He was forced to lay down his tools in mid-career; for he died at the age of forty-eight; and in the reaction toward the classic and the colonial that characterized American architec-

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ture during the nineties, it was Jefferson rather than Richardson that profited. It would have been a happier fate for American form if the emergence of one great Southern architect from undeserved neglect had not been canceled out by the submergence of the other, into a neglect equally undeserved. For each of these men was great in his particular way, and each succeeded in embodying a particular moment of American life and culture—Jefferson, that of the humanistic and classical inheritance which came to life pre-eminently on the Southern plantation; Richardson, those newer romantic and utilitarian currents, now impersonal and mechanical, now sentimental and burgeoning with insuppressible vitality, which characterized the nineteenth century. There are important lessons to be learned directly from both careers: there were further lessons that could be discovered only through trial and experiment, in the work of later architects, and through reflection upon the changing social needs of a later generation. It is on these further lessons that I purpose to dwell in the final lecture.

## LECTURE FOUR

### THE SOCIAL TASK OF ARCHITECTURE

In the last two lectures we have been surveying the contribution of the South to the art of building; and we have treated this art, not as a simple means of providing shelter, not as a clumsy kind of scene painting, but as an effort to reflect and enhance the purposes and ideals which characterize a particular age and people. This effort takes form in meeting the practical demands for an environment modified for human use; but the modifications that are made serve something more than the immediate needs: they testify to the degree of order, of co-operation, of intelligence, of sensitiveness, that characterize the community. More than that: architecture inevitably reflects the deeper beliefs of an age; it bears witness to current feeling about nature, about society, about the very possibilities of human improvement. It was no accident that when the industrialists of the nineteenth century were completely confident of their mission they should have built, with rigorous straight-

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forwardness, in iron and glass, sometimes ugly, always honest; and that when the parasitic interests of finance became uppermost, they should then attempt to hide their strong honest structures in relics of another imperial age—turning their railroad stations into Roman baths, and their banks into classic temples. Nor is it any accident perhaps that the doctrine of the total depravity of man in religion should have been accompanied by some of the ugliest church architecture that the eye of man has ever beheld.

Jefferson was a rationalist; Richardson was a vitalist. One was primarily an exponent of measure and order and logic; the other drew for his form upon a whole range of feelings and needs, some invisible, some obscure, some having deep emotional sources, which were too varied to be reduced to any simple rational principle. Each represents, at his best, the extremes of personality through which architectural form finds expression. You will find a classic general statement of this contrast in Dr. Walter Curt Behrendt's admirable book, *Modern Building*.

But architecture is like the human personality. It consists of body and spirit. Buildings have their roots in all the practical offices of life, and they must reflect the vitalities and appetites and physical pres-

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tures which are dominant at the moment; and yet buildings only partly fulfill their task in the human economy unless they also bear the imprint of mind and spirit, unless they bear the seed of an ideal order in which the culture of an age is truly expressed and fulfilled. Every good building is, so to say, part of a heavenly city; it must not merely be satisfactory in itself; but it must be part of a larger whole; for what we mean by the style of an age is precisely this inner fitness and harmony between all the separate structures it produces. That style is never purely a matter of using a similar kind of technique or utilizing common materials: today there are hundreds of buildings that utilize every modern mechanical device in their construction and operation, and still lack the essential style of the present age, and are as much out of harmony with it as a handicraft structure a couple of centuries old—sometimes, indeed, more out of harmony.

The classical modes of architecture that were taken over during the Renaissance, were attempts to achieve the underlying unity of a real style, in a period that was too disintegrated to be able to achieve the internal cultural unity that would have naturally given rise to it. The logic of classic architecture was

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sound provided one did not examine the premises on which it stood. For the apostles of classicism assumed too easily that a form which was more or less commonly in use under the Greeks and Romans was really a universal form: they set up as a general human standard something that expressed only partialities and provincialisms of a particular place and a particular era of history. By the middle of the nineteenth century we had outlived that provincial kind of universality. And yet the classicists were right in this sense: they believed in a universal order; and they believed that when such an order existed, one's choices became disciplined and rational; so that too much was not left to luck or caprice or chance or purely instinctive preferences.

The philosophic problem of the general and the particular has its counterpart in architecture; and during the last century that problem has shaped itself more and more into the question of what weight should be given to the universal imprint of the machine and the local imprint of the region and the community. This problem, however it is stated, applies to every part of our civilization: it touches our political and economic organization; yes, it even goes into the heart of our religious dilemmas. In

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posing this problem tonight, I might well cite Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr's recently published Gifford Lectures on The Nature and Destiny of Man. In those lectures he shows that the rationalistic approach to religion, which emphasizes Reason and Order, which dwells on the unities of the Logos and the Cosmos, does not do justice to the sinful nature of man, which makes him sanctify his own pettiness as the eternal voice of reason; while the emotional approach to religion, which denies and belittles the role of reason, finally is incapable of discriminating between the bad and the less bad, between the good and the greater good. Dr. Niebuhr points out that the formal and the universal, on one hand, and the vital and local, are both real; and the problem in applying religion to life is to reconcile them. That is, we must live under all the limitations of time and space; we must accept the relative goods, the partial aims, the limited order that belong to our human lot; and yet we must be able to modify our attitudes and deeds in the light of that which is timeless and without local habitation. In other words we must believe that two and two are eternally four; and yet we must know that in practice it makes a great difference whether we are adding two good apples to two bad

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ones, or whether all the apples are good—even if the ultimate end of our efforts is applesauce, in which their original separateness is wiped out.

The problem, to put it in its most general form, is how to live in a world of particular interests, how to be a member of one's family, one's college, one's community, one's region, one's country, without ceasing to be an active member of the human race, a good neighbor to people one will never see, and a co-operator with all those forces that will in time unify, strengthen, and sustain mankind as a whole. That problem has been sharpened for us today, because large groups of people have arisen who deny they have any allegiance to the universal, or any obligation to live under a common rule, obey a common moral law, act in terms of a common light and a common understanding. The practical outcome of this gospel of isolation is that millions of such people in Europe have already fallen the victims to the more dynamic kind of tribalism that the totalitarian countries practice. If this shortsighted and selfish gospel of isolation should continue to be imitated in America, we would have the deep dishonor of becoming the final victims of the Nazi onslaught against civilization. For the totalitarian powers, more posi-



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tively and violently denying the existence of our common humanity, bend their powers to destroying all of mankind's universal achievements: they attack with equal ferocity the internationalism of science and religion, and they have set out to make mankind as a whole live under the ugly, stultifying rules of their tribe.

You may think that all this has precious little to do with the problems of contemporary architecture; but if you do, you are certainly mistaken. It was not by accident that the Nazis singled out modern architecture, with its emphasis upon the rational and universal elements introduced through modern technics, as the embodiment of all that they hated: the burning of the books had its counterpart, not so well publicized, in the destruction of modern monuments and in the defacement or misuse of modern buildings. It is no accident that the Nazis removed the great Barlach war memorial in Hamburg, the work of probably the greatest sculptor Germany has produced since the sixteenth century, because its tender presentation of mother and child, and its simple inscription, innocent of boasting or vengeance, made everyone who saw it, whether an Englishman, a Frenchman, or an American, feel deeply at one with the

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sorrow of the citizens of Hamburg. That sort of universality must be wiped out, the Nazis know, if their insolent creed is to survive. It is no accident, either, that the Nazis ceased to build the handsome, well-planned, housing neighborhoods that Republican Germany had erected—communities which drew for their design upon the long series of rational experiments that England and the Netherlands had initiated. This sort of international co-operation, this habit of exchanging freely the best knowledge and the best practice of neighboring nations, in a spirit of give and take, must likewise be wiped out, if the so-called master race of Germans is to make good its desire to enslave the rest of the earth by force. Modern architecture is indeed an enemy of Nazidom, because it embodies the rational methods of thought, the humane purposes, and the friendly democratic co-operations that modern man sought to establish throughout the world. At its best, modern architecture organizes and articulates the positive values of our world civilization.

Yet, precisely because we are aware of all that is evil and barbarous and anti-human in the Nazi regime, we must not fail to do justice to its sources of strength. Just as part of the Nazis' military suc-

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cess has been due to the fact that they cashed in on the moral corruption of democracies that would submit to injustice and enslavement rather than risk death through physical resistance, so they attracted many people in their attacks on international architecture, because some of those who stood for the universal elements in our civilization had passed over too lightly the realities of home and land, and had forgotten the values men naturally and properly attach to the most intimate associations in their lives. And as Nazi brutality is a challenge to us in America, a challenge to us to become human enough to fight, so the Nazi deification of *Heimatsarchitektur*—old-fashioned native forms of building—is a reminder to us that, in accepting the universal order of the machine, we have the duty to make it human and see that it incorporates more, not less, of those social and esthetic elements that bind people sentimentally to their homes and their regions. By their shrieking inhumanities, the Nazis remind us to restore and recultivate our own humanness; and this applies to architecture no less than to our political existence.

And it is fortunate that we can turn to architecture for help in stating the more general human problem that lies before us today. For we all have a habit of

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thinking too exclusively in terms of verbal solutions; people think that a slogan, a catchword, a formula will, if we are lucky enough to find the right one, solve our problems. Our thinking will be well served if we learn to look to the arts for some light on problems that have many more sides than the verbal, legal, or political ones; for they will often show us, in relatively simple and concrete form, facts and possibilities that sometimes elude a purely verbal definition or demonstration. If all this still seems to some of you a very roundabout and complicated way of approaching the future of architecture in America, I can only remind you of the old proverb, that the longest way round is the shortest way home. For there is no use fooling ourselves about the essential fact that stares us all in the face today: and this is that our whole civilization is in danger of collapsing. Our state is much more serious, it seems to many of us, than that of the Roman Empire in the third century, A.D.; and if this is so, every contemporary discussion must sooner or later veer around toward a consideration of the broad picture; for, though it is gallant to play music to distract the passengers when a ship is going down, it is important, while there is a chance of saving the ship, to utilize every ounce of

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energy and skill in repairing the leaks and keeping it afloat.

We are interested in the South's contribution to architecture, I take it, precisely because we believe that this civilization is worth saving, precisely because we believe in human continuity; and we must therefore consider in this final lecture what has been happening to our civilization as a whole, in order to safeguard that future, that destiny, that free play of the human spirit, in which we emphatically believe.

Now the problem of reconciling form and life, the universal and the regional, becomes open and plain only at a fairly late stage in the development of a society. As long as physical hardships must be faced, as long as there is a poverty of energies and materials, as long as the immediate problems of survival are overwhelming, the problem hardly presents itself. The moment of dramatic conflict, between form and life, comes when a civilization has liberated itself from its animal necessities and is free to choose, that is, free to create. The individual, of course, may come face to face with the problem at a much earlier stage than his community; and we can see this in the work of the architects we have been dwelling on. Nevertheless it would be vain to look for any general

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formulation of the problem in American society before 1875: the organic solution, which began to take shape under the hands of Richardson, was more consciously formulated by the younger architects who had come under his example and influence in Chicago. I have now to pick up this thread and to point out where it led, particularly in the Middle West, and to begin with, in that great architectural expansion which took place between 1880 and 1910—centering around Chicago and Minneapolis.

Among the architects who took up the challenge, at the point where Richardson laid it down, was another Southerner—John Wellborn Root, who was born in Lumpkin, Georgia, in 1850. His father was a Yankee storekeeper who had moved South before John's birth; and Root's life, most unfortunately for our country, was an even briefer one than Richardson's. But Root was one of those who had viewed Richardson's work in its maturity; who had evaluated it and understood it; and whose own work cut deeper into the channels of design that Richardson had carved out. Like most of his young contemporaries in Chicago, Root's best work was done in the construction of high office buildings. Though the new steel-framed, fireproof skyscraper was first construc-

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tively worked out by Major Jenney in the Home Insurance Building in 1883, and first received its classic form in the Tacoma Building, done in 1888 by Messrs. Holabird and Roche, it was not by his technical command of this new form that Root proved that he was capable of organically meeting the demands of his age. Root's best building was a pure masonry construction, the Monadnock Building; one of the last of the tall buildings to be constructed by the exclusive use of the old methods and materials; and yet, so pure is the design, so beautifully articulated are all the elements of plan and construction, that this building remains today more modern in spirit than most of the skyscrapers that were erected, with so much self-bestowed flattery and unction, in the nineteen-twenties.

Mark this fact well and understand what it means. Most of us are accustomed to think that economic and technical facts come first. We think that the invention of the steam locomotive made people want to travel swiftly and that the invention of steel frame fireproof construction automatically produced the modern office building. The truth is just the opposite. It was the desire for speed, first manifested in the invention of sail-wagons, in the breeding of fast race-

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horses, in the playful contrivance of the roller coaster, that finally led to the more effective and economical invention of the steam-driven railroad train. And in the modern skyscraper, it was not the use of steel alone, but the use of the imagination in the organization of clerks, stenographers, and administrators, for the despatch of business, that led to the invention of a new form for building: an invention further promoted by the desire to increase ground rents by overcrowding the building lots. The proof of this is that in the Monadnock Building, thanks to the co-operation of the owners, Root succeeded in embodying, without the use of the new steel skeleton, the essential form of the modern office building. It was not merely in general treatment, but in plan and site layout, a rational form for modern business. So blind were his contemporaries to what he had done, so blind were his successors to its significance, that it was only in the last series of buildings put up in the new Rockefeller Center in New York that Root's early achievement here was substantially improved.

That building of Root's was sixteen stories high; it was built entirely of masonry, and it stood on a rectangular island, each side exposed to light and air; the walls are seven feet thick at its base, and the



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austere façade, with wide bays between narrow brick piers, rises to the roof without a spot of ornament other than the pattern of the bricks themselves. The Monadnock Building sang the new spirit of science, invention, rational calculation. It applied the human imagination to an order of building that had heretofore been treated with contempt. Here was an office building that pretended to be nothing more than an office building; it did not call itself a temple of finance or a cathedral of business; it did not pretend to be an art gallery or a palace: it was a place for the orderly facilitation of business, and every element in the building said just that. This was a logical continuation of Richardson's work; and had this spirit prevailed widely in American architecture—that is, had it prevailed in American life—our country would not have been victimized by an architecture as unscrupulous and meretricious as the business habits that gave rise to it.

A few capable architects, particularly in Chicago, carried on the spirit of Richardson—one of them, Louis Sullivan, would be worth a whole lecture by itself—but it was Sullivan's pupil, Frank Lloyd Wright, who widened Richardson's principles. It was a great moment for architecture when Sullivan's

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chief designer, young Frank Lloyd Wright, turned away from the great buildings that constituted Adler and Sullivan's main practice, and entered the field of domestic architecture. Here was a field from which the human had not been altogether expelled: no matter what rapacious conditions men might thrive under in Wall Street or the Loop, in the suburbs, where they settled their families and raised their children, they had regard for the more constant interests of the race. Wright had learned from Sullivan, if indeed he needed to be taught, that the architecture of our period must stand on its own feet, use the materials and methods of our own day, and ally itself to the forces of nature, as expressed in the landscape and climate of the area to be served. Nature rather than history was his teacher.

In the dwelling house, the problem of an organic form, which should be more than a narrow technical solution, could hardly be avoided: here Wright could not forget the problem of feeling, even if he had wanted to. With the help of a series of staunch and sympathetic clients, in particular a number of intelligent women, Wright here resumed the search for modern form, regional in quality, which Richardson had opened up. Wright took the wide horizon of the

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prairies as a guiding line, and spread his early houses, low and wide, across their ample suburban plots: he increased the sense of horizontality by raking the joints of the bricks parallel with the earth, and by arranging his casement windows—an innovation in the West in the eighteen-nineties—in long horizontal units. Within the house, Wright opened up the space and created a new kind of domestic interior, an improvement upon the late Victorian interior with its wide folding doors, in which the rooms flowed into each other and in which the hard and fast boundaries between one kind of room and another disappeared.

Since those early experiments Wright has designed houses for many other different regions than the prairie; and for each of them he has tried to evolve a form that would identify it with its landscape and accentuate the native materials that were used. Part of his respect for nature consists in letting the raw wood, the raw stone, the raw brick show themselves with the least alteration of their original color and texture: part consists in making a harmonious use of the site, and mingling the structure with the earth and the vegetation. But in principle, Wright's later practice was established in these early houses: established with a clarity that sometimes characterizes the

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early work of genius and does not always survive, in pristine form, in later examples of his work. Though Wright usually deprecates both the ability and the influence of Richardson, it is plain that he, even more than Sullivan or Buffington or Root—and all the more, perhaps, because unconsciously—was Richardson's most eloquent continuator.

In Wright's domestic architecture the gap between the universal and the local was closed up; for he created a truly organic form, in which both elements were steadily brought into play. No one, even among the skyscraper architects, was more ready than Wright to use the machine as an instrument for creating art; he was the conscious apologist for the machine, with its precision and standardization, as the welcome aid, rather than the handicap, of modern architectural genius. But still another universal influence, which entered into Wright's conception of modern form released from its local limitations was that of the Japanese print makers and builders. Wright has never fully clarified how far his conscious debt to the Japanese went. We know that long before he went to Tokyo to build the Imperial Hotel he was a loving collector of Japanese prints; we know that his sense of the proper use of materials, emphasizing their natural

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qualities, his horror of using paint on wood, his endeavor to make the garden flow into the house and become an intimate part of it, were traits that he shared with the classic Japanese craftsmen. We know, too, that the architectural magazines of the seventies and eighties in America contained frequent articles on Japanese art and architecture; and we know that in Rhode Island a returning missionary erected a Japanese house in the eighties, complete in every detail, out of homesickness for the country in which he had so long lived. We are bound to believe that one or another of these influences, coming at a critical moment in his development, may have had a part in shaping his imagination; and because Japanese architecture has lent itself to mechanical standardization, even though the products used were originally produced by handicraft, these exotic Eastern forms lent themselves all the more readily to American uses. But this was no mere imitation, like the imitation of Greek temple forms by American architects at the beginning of the nineteenth century: it was, in Wright's work, the outcome of a long process of esthetic feeling and assimilation. As a result, the universal elements blend thoroughly with the local elements: the spirit was embodied in suburban resi-

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dences that were thoroughly native to the Middle West, at the beginning of the twentieth century. In these new structures the universal and the regional, the rational and the vital, came together in a masterly synthesis. In principle, in outline, the problem of modern form was solved, or at least well on the way to solution. What remained was to turn an individual achievement into a social rule.

Wright's work had a far-reaching influence on the course of modern architecture; for he was a highly successful practitioner; and he was not merely the focal point for a whole school in the Middle West, but his designs, particularly after 1910, when the first book about him was published in Germany, had an influence over the architectural thinking of almost all the important Europeans, particularly in Holland and Germany, where, during the next twenty years, the great bulk of experimental and imaginative building was going on. Unfortunately, the lessons that were drawn from Wright's achievements did not always derive from the universal part of his work. Take, for example, one of the most characteristic features of his domestic work, the casting together into what becomes in effect a single room of the various public functions of the household, including a few of those

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that need privacy and solitude, like reading. This open plan was in part a natural reaction against the awkward room shapes and the narrow subdivision of space in middle-class quarters during Wright's youth. But it was also the expression of a very marked regional trait: the easy sociability of the Middle Westerner and his preference for a markedly extroverted kind of life: in short, his openness of character, as we call it. Perhaps one of the reasons why, today, the Middle West still finds it so hard to appreciate or sympathize with the English is that the modern Englishman's most treasured quality, his privacy, constitutes for the average Middle Westerner one of the seven deadly sins.

As a proper regional adaptation, Wright's open type of plan was admirable, given the time and the place for which it was created. But to take a form that grew out of such a highly localized characteristic and to attempt to universalize it is as serious an error as not understanding its fitness and appropriateness in its own environment. The universal element in Wright's architecture is not his open plan: it is rather the recognition that the plan must be in conformity, not merely with the climate and the landscape and the soil and the native materials, but with the social

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institutions and the dominant types of personality in the region. Regional characteristics, if they are to mean anything, must remain regional. A Cape Cod house is a house for Cape Cod; one of Wright's prairie houses is a house, not alone for the prairie, but for the people who live on the prairie. To transform such regional characteristics into a universal principle, without modifying that principle as fully as Wright had modified his Japanese precedent, is to betray the very qualities that make them so admirable in their original environment.

This argument has led me a considerable distance beyond my original appraisal of the regional and the universal qualities in Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture; and I go back to that now, not because this is the place to make any detailed evaluation of that great architect's work, but because the treatment of his architectural contributions, by his followers and interpreters, so well illustrates the difficulty of understanding the relations of the regional and the universal and of maintaining a balance between them. The natural tendency of the lazy human mind is to erect a local characteristic into a universal principle, or to apply a universal form without modifying it to the particular occasion and function it must serve. In the



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contemporary renaissance of building, it is important to keep these elements in constant tension and interaction. The so-called international school of architecture is entirely right in insisting that science and the machine have created a universal basis for all technics; so that a common way of building, based on new materials and new technical possibilities, must characterize structures in every part of the world as it characterizes the design of telephones or motor cars. They are right, too, in thinking that the particular poetry of our era will spring in part from an imaginative use of the machine, and that those who are ashamed of their new resources, or who attempt to cover them up by outworn tags of ornament, are as remote from the sources of beauty as they are from the simple canons of economy. Even when traditional materials are used, we must use them in the light of our modern knowledge: we must not let a heavy piece of squared timber take the place of a light two by four, or a heavy old-fashioned piece of paneling take the place of our modern plywood: rather, our readiness to dramatize the lightness and elegance of our new methods, our effort to make our buildings visibly a part of the age that produced the airplane, will be the key to our success. As a matter of fact, such an

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international style characterizes all the great periods of architecture, from the Gothic of the thirteenth century to the baroque of the seventeenth; and it would be strange, indeed it would be monstrous, if the age of the radio and the transatlantic telephone exhibited a weaker formal unity in building than did the thirteenth century which was united only by the horse and the ox-cart and a common belief in the Catholic Church.

Modern man, we can all see at last—now that our common civilization is crumbling and falling in every part of the planet—modern man must use his scientific and technical knowledge to help create a common world, whose boundaries will coincide with those of the human race. As the writers of *The City of Man* have said, he must oppose to the fascist doctrine, “everything must be within the totalitarian state, nothing against the totalitarian state, nothing outside the totalitarian state,” another principle: “democracy teaches that everything must be within humanity, nothing against humanity, nothing outside humanity.” Today this faith is even more valid and precious than it was during the middle of the nineteenth century, when it was so confidently preached. Plainly, the brotherhood of the machine is not a substitute for the

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brotherhood of man; but the universal principles of science and technics are at least one of the foundation courses of the new City of Man; and one of the tasks of the modern architect is to dramatize those principles, to give them dignity, to make them visible.

What is true of the geographical elements in building was even more true of the social conditions. Half the misdemeanors of architecture in every age are the result of an attempt to fit rational structures into an irrational social pattern. Though long ago Ruskin announced, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, that architecture has a social and an ethical, as well as a technical and decorative, side, this important perception has been misunderstood; indeed it was partly misapplied by Ruskin himself. It is not the private outlook of the builder or the workman that one puts weight on, when one treats of this side of architecture, though obviously it makes a great difference whether even the most minor job is done by a rogue or an honest man. But in its larger applications, the quality of architecture is governed by the conventions and ideals of the community: architects will do things in one way when human values are uppermost and questions of beauty, health, fitness, and harmony

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occupy them; and they will build in quite another fashion when the only governing ideal is that of creating the maximum amount of rentable space or the maximum glorification of the owner's ego—no matter what the social results.

The height of a building, the amount of land it occupies, its relation to neighboring structures, the development of the surrounding neighborhood—all these are social matters, which cannot be left solely in private hands, on the theory that the individual owner of property is responsible only to himself and his conscience. Unless social bounds are set to economic greed, unless the organized intelligence of the community itself plays a part in every individual development, the result is bound to be disorder and frustration. The more power we put into the hands of the individual builder, through our command of the physical processes of construction, the more important it becomes to moralize him and socialize him, so that this power will be used, not for mere self-advancement, but for the welfare and honor of the community. The whole transformation that has taken place in architecture during the last fifty years has fallen far short of its potentialities because we did not develop a new community pattern and a new type of city

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plan which would enable us to make the fullest use of our technological achievements. And why did this new pattern not develop? Because property values took precedence over social needs; because the pursuit of wealth, because the aggrandizement of the powerful, thrust aside as entirely secondary, indeed, as almost non-existent, the real needs of the community.

In general, the people who have been most eager to further mechanical improvement have more or less taken for granted that, by continuing to make mechanical inventions, they could set aside the more difficult moral problems of creating a just and co-operative society. Only a dozen years ago, before the bubble of financial speculation burst, there were many people in this country, from President Hoover down, who talked as if mass production would remove the need for devising a more equitable system of distributing the goods that were produced—as if the businessman, in diligently pursuing the fattest profits by the most reckless processes of inflation and monopolistic control would somehow solve automatically the moral problems that had vexed the intelligence and conscience of Moses and Isaiah, of Plato and Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. This was a delusion.

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The facts are just the opposite. Lacking moral principles, lacking the will to create a better social order, half our scientific knowledge and technological innovations are either not used at all, or are extravagantly misused.

Hence the international style cannot be a mechanical stereotype: it cannot take a form that was beautifully adapted to the geographic and social environment of Birmingham and apply it, without modification to Bombay; it cannot even take a form that was finely adapted to Birmingham and apply it blindly to Montgomery. To avoid that sort of automatism the architect must be so completely at home in his art, so thoroughly the master of its possibilities, so well fortified by the aid of the building industries and the co-operation of his fellow workers and craftsmen, that he can give the better part of his attention to matters that lie outside the immediate province of building—to the geographic and economic, social and political and psychological elements that are bound up with the conception and execution of his design. For it is in these latter departments that the great advances remain to be made; it is here that feeling and knowledge, properly focused, deftly applied, will give

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their fullest returns to both the architect and the community.

This is not an idle conjecture or an idle hope on my part. The great change that has taken place in American architecture during the past decade has been in the realm of community building. It owes little to any purely formal or technological inventions: it has rather been the work of a group of architects who, beginning in 1917, set out to focus attention upon the communal aspects of building and to formulate, if not solve, some of the economic and political problems connected with building. These architects, under the decisive leadership of Clarence Stein, Frederick Lee Ackerman, and the late Henry Wright, turned the attention of American architects to the field of housing: they conceived of the house, not as an isolated dwelling, but as part of a neighborhood community; and they showed that our older methods of ugly, wasteful, and disorderly building were the inevitable results of disregarding the essential economic and political factors in housing. Many other people of course participated in this demonstration; but it was thanks to such leadership, on the part of architects who dared to think as community planners, as regional planners, as statesmen, that the systematic

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re-housing of the population of the United States has begun: a process whose effects upon the health and welfare of the people will become more visible and more important in the days to come.

Only a decade ago there was no such thing as a national housing policy: there was no legislative recognition of the fact that a good part of the citizens in our democracy, in the open country no less than in the crowded cities, were living in blighted neighborhoods and in ramshackle, ill-designed, and ill-equipped houses that were a disgrace to all the boasts of a free and democratic civilization. There was as yet, only a decade ago, no attempt to set a minimum standard for decent building throughout the country, no concerted effort to wipe out the slums, above all, no general interest in how it happens that two-thirds of the population of the country cannot afford to live in houses that meet a decent human standard, in terms of the energies and the scientific knowledge available in modern civilization. No one can say that in the last ten years the evil effects of a whole century of social disorganization, of poverty, and of mis-building have been done away with: but at least a start has been made, thanks to the fact that the national government has assumed a major share of the responsi-



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bility for supplying both the funds and the technical standards necessary to effect a wholesale improvement.

Not all of the work that has been done under the various housing administrations has been of the highest caliber, either from the standpoint of the individual design or of the plan of the community. Too much of our housing still shows the bad habits formed under the shortsighted speculative builder and the rapacious ground landlord; and in the haste to put men to work and to get concrete results, too little fresh thinking has been done along the lines of community planning and architectural innovation. This is not merely because of the tendency to stereotype forms when administration and supervision are conducted from a distant center; it is not merely because there is a certain tendency to cling to a safe level of mediocrity in all large-scale organizations, a tendency which the private manufacturer of motor cars shows as plainly as the government administrator. These retarding influences have indeed been at work; but what has been far more serious has been the lack of architects and community planners capable of thinking about community planning in terms of a still larger picture, and capable, because of that kind of thinking, of trans-

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forming every element in the design. Yet that lack only points to a similar deficiency in the population at large.

Architecture and community planning are both eminently social arts; and this means that the intelligence and purpose of the planner must be shared by the community which he serves. To create noble communities we cannot rely solely upon the technicians, however good they may be: we must, through our homes and schools and churches, nurture people who wish to live noble and honorable lives: people who are as much interested in enlarging the horizon of life for their neighbors as they are in getting this or that private enjoyment or advantage for themselves. Poor houses, blighted areas, rundown communities, are symptoms of social failure: a failure to share economic goods and to spread the benefits of our democratic culture: they are signs of a social erosion which is no less threatening to a stable social life than the erosion of soils is to rural life. Architecture, as we must conceive it in the twentieth century, is more than a matter of building this or that beautiful building: it is a matter of ordering, of harmonizing, of perfecting the entire structure of our civilization. If we begin with the individual building, we must end with

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the community design: if we begin with the organization of the region and the city, we must end by bringing the humblest house up to a good common standard—and if the individual worker's income will not enable him to rent or buy such a house, that is a sure sign that there is inefficiency or injustice—or a combination of inefficiency and injustice—in the economic system under which he works.

Where social interests have been paramount in our architectural planning, the results have been decisively good: so good indeed that we must attribute their success not only to the skill of the individual practitioners but to the guiding purposes behind them. Roland Wank's power stations in the Tennessee Valley, for example, have been conspicuous architectural achievements: Harry Sims Bent's service structures in the parks and playgrounds of Honolulu have created a new esthetic level for such buildings; and some of the little communities erected by the Farm Security Administration, particularly some of those designed for migratory labor in California—communities done with the simplest means, at the least possible cost—show the result of a more organic kind of thinking, which deals freely and ably with every detail of the architect's problem because he faces,

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with equal boldness, every part of the life that is to be served, and looks upon no service as too mean to exist without benefit of human feeling and human imagination. Our great task today is to educate people who can face the problem of form and design, not as an isolated esthetic problem, not as an isolated technical problem, but as a fundamental all-round problem in living: people who can deal with equal competence with every part of their field, who are as ready to handle the psychological elements as they are to deal with purely physical stresses and strains: who regard the political and social needs of building as no less significant, as no less urgently demanding their attention, than the technical and esthetic needs.

For us, therefore, approaching the middle of the twentieth century, the problem of architectural form is a far broader one than it was for Thomas Jefferson, or even than it was, half a century later, for Henry Hobson Richardson and his immediate successors. Our problem is one of life and death: on our success in facing it our very survival as a democratic people may depend. We must give form and order to a democratic civilization: we must create houses, schools, factories, farmsteads, villages, and cities that are fit to be called the home of a democratic people. We

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must wipe out the inevitable results of more than a century of indifference and neglect: we must turn blighted areas of land into productive acres once more, and we must turn blighted urban areas into decent human neighborhoods. We must open up a decent life to our people, realizing that every home and garden and neighborhood must express beauty and human purpose, and that the right to be human is the foundation stone of a democratic society—for where that right is flouted, people will relapse into barbarism and slavery. We must treat architecture, not as the luxurious art of the rich and powerful, but as the fundamental expression of a democratic society: the embodiment of human order, human purpose, human design. Architecture must become primarily a public service, and our architects must become public servants, imaginatively interpreting and embodying the needs of our democracy. We cannot count the cost of such a nationwide renovation any more than we can count the cost of a war: matters of life and death do not submit to such calculations. Nor can we hope to accomplish the needful changes in our society whilst we attempt cagily to protect the selfish ideals and the anti-social habits that have created the disordered environment that now confronts us. To have

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worthy buildings and a worthy land, we ourselves must become worthy of them.

Without doubt, ladies and gentlemen, the task that I am suggesting for architecture now would be a vast one in times of prosperity and plenty; and no one who looks forward with clear eyes to the coming years can reasonably promise himself or his countrymen any of the accustomed luxuries and comforts of the past. We shall have to trim all the fat off our personal expectations: all that we can hope for, as a reward for facing the tasks of our day, is what Churchill promised the British. Blood and sweat and tears.

But there is a happy side to this picture. The period of material prosperity over which people once upon a time waxed lyrical, was one of fundamental social impoverishment; and a great part of even our material gains were canceled out by disorder and waste and decay. But when a democratic people is stirred to action, when all it holds dear is in peril both through inner decay and external attack, when it finally sweeps aside all small individual aims and confronts the ultimate issues of its existence, its power for sacrifice endows it with new energies and new possibilities. If our countrymen rise to the present occasion, if they have the courage, not to await in

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a timid, cringing attitude of defense the attack of the totalitarian powers, but are ready boldly to take the initiative on behalf of human freedom—if they do this they will cast off the ugly temptations of material prosperity and find, by a reverse process, a higher compensation in the social wealth they will command. When the social energies are high, when men possess a religious sense of what is worth living for, what is worth fighting for, what is worth dying for, then nothing is impossible. I would remind you, as a motto for our country in the days to come, of the words that Thomas Jefferson wrote to his daughter Martha, in 1787. “We are always,” Jefferson wrote, “equal to what we undertake with resolution. . . . It is part of the American character to consider nothing as desperate.” A democracy that takes those words to heart will have a solid foundation for both its life and its architecture.















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